THE HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM

EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES

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Eight sermons delivered at Harvard University by one of the most noted teachers of the psychology of religion in this country. They emphasize the social nature of the individual and the value of social service, and, among other things, the world-old quest for a more abundant and ideal life. An earnest book for the scholar or thinker who is of a religious turn of mind.

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By Edward Scribner Ames

THE HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

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BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER
REV. LUCIUS AMES

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PREFACE

THESE sermons were delivered in Appleton Chapel of Harvard University, during 1912–13 and 1913–14, in the periods of the author's service as a member of the Board of Preachers to the University.

Though not conceived with reference to a general plan, the sermons express certain fundamental ideas characteristic of the constructive tendency in current religious thinking. Among these ideas are the social nature of the individual and the value of social service; the charm of the nearer view of Jesus; the naturalness and accessibility of the central religious experiences, such as regeneration, inspiration, and the mystical moods; and the world-old quest for a more abundant and a more ideal life.

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THE HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM

THE HIGHER INDIVIDUALISM

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 1 *Cor.* XII, 27.

In the depths of every normal, vigorous human being is a powerful impulse to possess and to preserve his own personality, to maintain his identity, to be himself, to be some one in particular. It is the expression of the will to live, manifested in acts of self-defense in the presence of danger, and in the self-assertion of appetite, acquisitiveness, curiosity, and growth. This will to live gives rise to various kinds of individualism.

In its most elemental form it is an individualism self-centered, grasping, and tyrannical. It grows by conquest and assimilation. It is seen in the animal world among those species which live so much in isolation and prey upon others, as do the lion and tiger. It is also the law of the jungle that the herd and the pack shall be ruled and led by the fleetest runner and the fiercest fighter. He reigns supreme so long as he can make his kill and subdue all rivals. Much of human society has been of that pattern, enabling one or a few power-

ful men to dominate the mass. The names of Nero and Napoleon have become symbols of this pride and lust of power. The motto of such individualism is that might makes right, and its philosophy is a crude doctrine of the superman, and of the survival of the fittest. But it is an individualism which everywhere tends to defeat itself, for any conspicuous examples of it create envy and conflict. The same craving for self-assertion and power stirs in all classes of men and asserts itself after every tyranny by revolution and reprisal, or by some wiser and more comprehensive individualism. This is true not only in the state, but also in industry and in all forms of social organization. Children who are made too subservient to a repressive authority at home are likely to become bullies and dictators in their play and work.

Corresponding to this individualism of might, whether based upon physical force, or caste, or wealth, there has been throughout the history of civilization an individualism of renunciation, of self-abnegation. Asceticism has this motive. Regarding the world as evil and human contact as contaminating, it takes its precious self out of society and away from its contagion. But this kind

of asceticism is not now so much in vogue. We are beset by a more self-indulgent and luxurious retirement from the world which exercises extreme care and cleverness in carrying away most of the comforts and few of the disturbances of organized society. The news service and rapid transit make it possible to satisfy one's human curiosity and one's creature cravings without bearing the responsibility of voting in the city elections or doing jury service or sharing at close range the actual life of more than a few persons. There is constant protest against the increasing regulation of business and industry and personal conduct. Our personal liberty, it is claimed, is curtailed and endangered. A noted educator recently called upon university men, especially, to exert their influence against such over-regulation. But the average man easily escapes that inconvenience. In the midst of cities, with multitudes of human beings in adjacent spaces, he may yet experience the deepest solitude, a solitude which may be more complete than that of state prisons or of ancient monasteries. For in the monasteries, at least, there were some communal tasks and some common assemblies. In the modern city people tend to become, in large measure, mere physical ob-

jects to one another. In the street cars they glance up indifferently from behind their newspapers. There is little joy of comradeship or of mutual acquaintance. In and out of the throng a man may go and come, abstracting from it, for a price, whatever he craves, without binding himself to any serious relationships or permanent associations. It is the boarding-house attitude toward life so well illustrated in the first act of the play, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back."

One often hears the theory of individualism calculated to fit this manner of life. It is said that one should develop his own personality and should cultivate originality and novelty more than is possible if one identifies himself closely with social organizations and institutions.

Modern civilization is represented as vulgarized by uniformity and monotony. They say it is dominated by the machine, the symbol of repetition and duplication. A huge printing-press or steel die produces innumerable copies of the same design with the utmost precision and speed. Everything is standardized and labeled. Clothing and furniture are ready-made, and our very bread and butter bear the shape and form of the moulds. And human life is not exempt. Even the public

schools boast in some States, as if it were an end in itself, that at any moment of the day the superintendent knows that all the thousands of pupils in a given grade are engaged upon exactly the same task. The Church, too, it is alleged, offers a prescribed set of doctrines and a preconceived type of "experience" to which all individuals are required to conform.

In protest against all this the individualist clings to separateness and isolation, in order that institutions may not close in upon him and dwarf his powers. He feels that participation in organizations means suppression, conformity to type, the duplication of a set pattern. Nothing seems so deadening as imitation, as the control of custom and convention. I recently heard a man inveigh against all uniforms for street-car men, messenger boys, and nurses, on the ground that they obscure the individual, lessen his self-respect and swallow him up in a vast impersonal system. His assumption was that an institutional system is always hard and exacting, demanding everything and affording nothing human and ennobling in return. In so far as institutions are of that nature, they do obscure and deaden individual talent and initiative, and men will continue to loathe and to

exploit them. But individualism which consists in this conscious opposition and negation of social relations always tends to be shallow and fantastic and unhappy. It mistakes eccentricity for genius, and mere divergence for advancement.

The individualism suggested by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians is of another kind. It does not consist in dominating others, or in having as little as possible in common with them, but it is marked by the fullest and most intimate association. It is the Pauline conception of being members of the body of Christ. This is often interpreted to mean that the individual members are subordinate to the body as a whole, as if the emphasis fell upon magnifying the Church. But it is also possible to discover here a new evaluation of the individual through his function as an organ of the body. "Now ye are members of the body of Christ, and members in particular." "Members in particular" describes a higher individualism, achieved through interdependence and mutual support. It is not the surrender of one to another, or the monotonous repetition of the same function, but it is the adjustment and development of each part through

its own peculiar relation to every other part. This enrichment of the individual by social interaction has sometimes been overlooked through the direction of attention to the social whole. But it is of the highest significance, while realizing the importance of the larger social organism, to keep in mind also the individual development which each member attains in and through it.

The simplest social transactions show that all parties involved are required, by the nature of the service they render one another, to maintain their individual character and function. When a customer enters a store to make a purchase, the clerk does not become an automaton or an imitator. It is his business, in answer to inquiries, to display the goods, to make explanations in answer to questions, to interrogate the customer in turn for further information, and to play his own special part with judgment and initiative. His responses are scarcely the same with any two customers throughout the day, for he is coöperating successively with different persons to supply their varying wants. And the clerk is not the only one who responds to the customer's need. Beyond him, in turn, are the cashier and the wrapping clerk and the delivery boy, and more remotely the floor

walker, the manager, the buyer, the proprietor, and the rest. All coöperate to serve the customer, yet no two of them perform the same act. The deed of each is a signal for a different deed by the next in line through the entire system.

The contribution of team play to the individualism of all members of the team illustrates the same principle. We have magnified team work as if any particular player were quite lost in the larger unit. But in fact no member surrenders his individuality. The very ground of his success is to do with all his might his particular duty, and that duty is different from the duty of any other. Every man must keep his eye on the ball, but with a view to a possible course of action determined by his own unique position and function. So individualistic do the members of the most efficient teams become that expertness in one place is scarcely any guaranty of success in another. Indeed, — and this proves the utter refinement of individualism within a developed social group, — the very power and technique which a man attains in a given position often literally unfits him for like success in any other position in his group. The tendency is for the members of the team to become more and more differentiated from one

another and at the same time mutually more interdependent.

The same condition obtains in modern society, whose great men are the specialists, the experts. They are representatives of the highest individualism. They develop only in a highly organized social order and they cannot function apart from it. They are members of the corporate organism, and they are members in particular. When a man in an undeveloped society dies, it is not difficult to find another man to take his place; but when a man of the higher civilization dies, his personality cannot be replaced. Other men may bear the same official title and the same insignia of honor, but they cannot be what the first man was. Not only our poets and artists and inventors, but our statesmen and our merchants and our soldiers, have been unique and original. This is not because they stood aloof from their time and from their fellows, but precisely because they entered so deeply into the common life and fulfilled their manifold relations so completely. No men have been at once such typical and such exceptional Americans as Ben Franklin and Abraham Lincoln. They cannot be thought of as trying to make themselves different. On the contrary they

were always losing themselves in the common cause. They were literally the servants of all, and just by virtue of serving all their countrymen they developed many-sided, profoundly distinguished characters.

The same great law was fulfilled in the life of Jesus, and is the source of his inexhaustible attractiveness and charm. There is always something wonderfully appealing yet elusive about the personality of Jesus. He was not like any one else, and yet he was like everybody. His words were so true to human experience that they might have been said by any one. Yet their very obviousness and convincing quality made them different, added something indescribable and immeasurable, which distinguished him from his predecessors, from his disciples, and from all the rest of the world before and since his time. The people who heard him were astonished at his doctrine, and the people of our own time still marvel at his simple yet fathomless words. There he stands a plain peasant of Galilee, a carpenter's son, a friend of publicans and sinners, speaking from the clear pictures of life mirrored in his pure, deep soul. No one can misunderstand them and no one can exhaust their meaning. He is the embodiment

of the genius of his people, the focus of a world of spiritual forces and the radiating center of creative moral energy and truth.

Some one has suggested that the personality of different men might be represented by a great system of electric lamps. When the current is turned on to represent a given man, it not only illuminates the bulb which bears his name, but a glow lightens all the lamps which designate the lives interwoven with his own. Thus each person's character traces its own figure, no one being entirely limited to a single point, while the greatest individuals extend circles upon circles, and lines upon lines of light.

An external account of a man's lineage and training may give only slight clues to the fullness and complexity of his nature. The living world of his imagination, his interior responsiveness to life, may enfold less intimately the companion at his side than it does some sage of the distant past or the dream face of some poet's song. The whole environment is therefore different for various persons. No two strike life at the same angle and no two get the same response. The more complex society becomes, the greater are the variations within this interior, spiritual experience. Any

outward uniformities which convenience and comfort may impose for the general good do not lessen this larger freedom. Often they enhance it, as when the Government fixes a uniform postal rate for great and small citizens alike, and thereby opens thoroughfares for new movements of spiritual energy. In these higher ranges of association no individual is a mere copy of any other. Imitation is impossible not only because of difference in inherited capacity, but because a living organism differentiates all its members by the functions they perform. The two hands cannot wear the same glove. The two ears experience varying intensity of sound. The two eyes receive different rays of light.

There are sayings of Jesus which indicate something more than imitation as the principle of his fellowship. He said, "I call you no longer servants but friends," and the very essence of friendship is the interplay of minds not entirely alike, a real give-and-take of experience. That friendship grew with the tasks the disciples performed and with the dangers and perplexities they confronted, yet each bore his own cross and was responsible for the investment of his peculiar talents.

But it is especially in the letters of the apostle Paul that this higher individualism receives its fullest religious exemplification and interpretation. To him the followers of Christ are fused into a living body, a spiritual society, an ideal kingdom. Such a society became actual and visible in every city of the Roman world where he gathered converts and organized a church. Each group was in miniature and ideally what all of them together were conceived to be in their united, corporate character. Each was the symbol of the body of Christ within which every member had his place and function. These functions were the natural divisions of labor, such as administration, teaching, preaching, and healing. And the apostle virtually took up all natural, social relations into this religious life, for he exhorts husbands and wives, children and servants and masters and business men, to fulfill their duties as religious obligations, "as unto the Lord." Nothing could be clearer than his insistence upon the community of interest which all share and the distinctness and identity of each member. The body is one organism, animated by one spirit. The individualism which the members attain is not that of independence of each other, "for the eye cannot

say unto the hand, I have no need of thee." Nor is it an individualism in which one member ignores or disdains the others, "for the body is not one member, but many."

The Church thus conceived is a great dynamic society organized to overcome the evil forces of the world, to battle against spiritual wickedness and the powers of darkness. In its warfare each member has his duty to perform. To be efficient he must learn to work with others, to develop the special function for which he is fitted, and to bear whatever part the struggle may thrust upon him. It is only by this sense of organic relation to the whole reality of life that a man feels his essential worth and dignity. In some sense every moral person does feel his conduct to have absolute and final value. The teacher, at his best, has a sense that his work is of crucial significance. To impart an untruth or a flippant word when an earnest, serious message is demanded, is to break faith with the universe. Whereas to utter a tested and illuminating truth is to become a co-worker with the soul of things and to feel the pull of the anchor on the solid rock.

When the captain of a great ship stands on the bridge in the hour of danger, he is conscious that

destiny hangs upon his quick perception and decision. Human beings are aboard who have entrusted themselves to his care. No one else can take his place or answer for his deed. He stands there with the weight of the world upon him. It is the moment which has haunted his imagination ever since he went to sea. In the crisis of events everything is in his hand. His life is magnified, not because he is alone, but because he is the focus of a vast system of human values and forces of nature. To succeed at his task in such an hour is to be the bearer of life to the world; but to fail is to be overwhelmed in the storm and darkness.

In similar manner ordinary persons engaged in the real work of life have the thrill and the stress of great responsibility by virtue of their participation in a complex system of industry or administration. It is appalling to realize what trusts are committed to the obscure railway switchman, the turn of whose hand, or whose misjudgment of a signal, may wreck a train. Or think what decrees of fate lie in a mother's care or neglect of her child.

Yet in their deepest natures men crave this tang and terror of real life. They cannot be satisfied apart from the great social organism. Nothing

is so gruesome as an eye or a hand separated from the body, and every sane man shudders to think of himself in lonely and useless isolation. That is the pang of the lost. Hell is the place of outer darkness where everything is swallowed up in chaos and night, and the souls of the damned wander in perpetual solitude.

Only a little less severe punishment is it to have instruments and tools and never be allowed to lay one's hand to their real use in the world. To work at a telegraph key which is never connected with the actual wires, or to speak into a disconnected telephone, or, like a child, to hold the ends of the reins where one cannot really guide the horses, is to suffer utter emptiness and detachment.

It is on this account that men really love their uniforms. The braid and buttons are signs of membership in an order. They mean that one has a place on life's team. He counts in the calculations of other men, and in the scrimmage which is sure to come he will feel the strain and have the glorious sense of helping in the struggle.

The apostle Paul summons men into the great spiritual brotherhood of Christian love and service. He invites them into a bondage which is the

highest freedom. He knew that just laws are the means of power to every one who obeys them. Their yoke is easy and their burden is light. It is in the fellowship of mutual service that men are losing their narrow and lesser selves and finding their larger and diviner selves. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life in the service of Christ and his fellow man, shall surely find it.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. *Matt.* xxv, 37–40.

Successive periods in the history of the Church have emphasized different ideals of Christianity. The first century was peculiarly the age of the martyrs. Paganism regarded the humble disciples of Jesus as traitors to the emperor, and hunted them to the death as criminals. The Church, in turn, non-militant and meek, welcomed every opportunity to witness her faith by patient suffering, through every persecution. By the exigencies of her conflict, the apostles became martyrs like their master. The lowliest followers coveted the same fate. The fury of the old order was met by the eager surrender of the new religion. The greater the Roman thirst for their blood, the readier were the Christians to die, until the martyrs became the despair of the Cæsars and the ideal of the Church.

In the fourth century asceticism prevailed. Estrangement from the natural life of society and contemplation of heavenly existence withdrew men from the world. Solitude was sought as escape from temptation and as opportunity for meditation and self-denial. Her first contact with government, learning, and wealth made the Church fearful and distrustful. Consequently she exalted the life of renunciation and of preparation for the future.

In the twelfth century, the Christian warrior, the valiant knight of the crusades, came forward in the consciousness of the Church. Romantic and visionary as they were, the crusaders roused the latent energy of Christendom and furnished opportunity for action and for the exercise of the imagination. The knight was a strange blending of warlike savagery and Christian gentleness, but he became just on that account, the type and symbol of religion in his time.

In similar sharp definition stands out the mystic of the fourteenth century. He is projected on the rigid background of ecclesiasticism and institutionalism. He insists upon direct and immediate access to God without priest or pope. His character is fashioned in reaction against tradi-

tion and in the quest for freedom and direct contact with the divine. Likewise the theologian is the conspicuous Christian of the sixteenth century. He is the exponent of a book religion over against what he regards as the human authority of the Church and the vagaries of the inner light. To him the great saints are the intellectual interpreters of the faith, the expounders of the Scriptures and the creed. Correct belief becomes the standard of orthodoxy, and every candidate for membership in the Church, from the least to the greatest, is examined with reference to his reasons for the faith that is in him.

And now in this twentieth century the Christian ideal is undergoing another transformation. The theological saint is losing prestige. His creeds are discredited by greater knowledge and by broader vision. As the image of the theologian dissolves and fades from view, there is emerging the ideal of the social worker. He is becoming typical of the Christianity of our day. This is apparent in the official, representative acts of the Church. All of the important denominations have appointed commissions on social service, and have received their recommendations with enthusiasm. The schools for ministerial education have

introduced courses in sociology. The Church has adopted a social service programme in foreign missions, in city parishes, and, more recently, in rural communities. This means turning attention to the great central problem of human welfare with unprecedented energy and intelligence. Religion has a new concern for health. It is enlisted to prevent disease as well as to cure and nurse the sick. The Church is awakening to its duty in the campaigns against child labor, white slavery, alcoholism, prison abuses, corruption in politics and every form of social injustice. Ministers are becoming the advocates of educational reforms, the extension of playgrounds, better housing, the advancement of woman, international peace, and the science of eugenics.

But in all the struggle for social welfare there remains a lingering, deep-seated doubt whether this is genuinely religious work. Shall we, by this programme continue to have a truly spiritual religion? Will it generate vital, personal religion? Or has the Church been led to take up functions which may be exercised in an external, mechanical way? Some fear that it is another form of mere "works" which may be carried on without faith. The social settlement, they say,

has sometimes been remote from the Church. It has seldom conducted religious services, or required of its workers any profession of faith. Others believe that religion has found a new dynamic in social service, and that a new faith and a new fervor are springing from it. It is my conviction that the latter are right. I wish to emphasize some of the religious elements in these new activities of the churches.

First, this practical, social Christianity is the most Biblical of all the historical forms. Other ideals, those of the martyr, the monk, the knight, the mystic, the theologian, have been able to cite certain texts of Scripture in their own behalf. It is true that blessings are pronounced upon the persecuted and upon those who love not the world. There are also texts in which we are exhorted to have a reason for the faith that is in us. But the central doctrine of Scripture is that Christians are finally known and tested by their fruits. We enter the kingdom, not by saying, Lord, Lord, but by doing his will; not by repeating prayers in his name so much as by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and the imprisoned. "What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with

thy God?" "Pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction." The Good Samaritan was a more typical New Testament Christian than the priest or the Levite, and he is more typical now than the mystic or the theologian.

The Christian of this twentieth century is a more normal and natural Christian than the martyr or monk, the crusader or the expounder of creeds. Each of them was the result of some peculiar strain or wrench which Christianity suffered in its contact with the world. To-day for the first time in two thousand years Christianity stands free from such cramping and deforming influences. The persecutions have ceased. The Church is no longer fleeing from the world. Christianity is at home on the earth and in the flesh and is on terms of the finest coöperation with the great forces of society. "The world," in the sense of the base and vicious things of life, has lost too much of its illusion and is too well understood to frighten any intelligent Christian into solitude. The martyr and the monk did not have the resources and the mastery of life which Christian people now possess. The crusader and the mystic were the products of a certain vague and restless dreaming

which science and experience have in large part dispelled.

Even the theologian of the old school was the result of an imperfect and partial view of life. The age in which he lived regarded the Bible as the direct and perfect revelation of the divine will. There was no sufficient understanding of the historic process by which the Scriptures had been produced. There was no adequate appreciation of that most important fact, that every system of theology is an interpretation, and that all interpretation involves a point of view. It has remained for recent thought to realize with any fullness that the Biblical literature has a point of view within itself and that this point of view is man's struggle for a larger life. It is the will to live, to have life, and to have it more abundantly, which constitutes the organizing, dynamic impulse of the experiences which the Scriptures record. In all other periods religion has been forced to content itself with a partial and one-sided development of human nature, often fanatical and doctrinaire. For the first time the Church is consistently and conscientiously devoting itself to a virile, practical, reasonable, and yet spiritual ideal of what a Christian life should be. Chris-

tianity has just begun to be herself without constraint or artifice, and in this happy emancipation she sees more clearly than ever before that a spiritualized social order is the vision and goal of New Testament Christianity.

Jesus was constantly insisting that human life in its highest form is the true end of his religion. The Sabbath — the symbol and embodiment of all ceremonial — the Sabbath was made for man, and man should not be subordinated to it nor burdened by it. The lowest and most sinful person is of measureless value, and woe to any one who disregards or injures him. The whole world's wealth and power are worthless compared with one human soul. The truth itself is for man. It is to make him free. In every way the religion of Jesus magnifies as its fundamental purpose the rescue and the culture of men. It seeks and saves the lost and it enriches those "who are neither poor, ignorant, nor depraved." At its heart it is a religion for making and remaking men, for cultivating in them sympathy, forbearance, and mutual helpfulness in the process of building the ideal society which is the kingdom of God.

Now it is precisely this ideal which is fascinating the modern mind. It has been the objective of

our political revolutions, struggling for democracy; and of our industrial revolutions, throwing off the burdens of toil; and it is the goal of our manifold uplift movements at the present time. We are getting the idea of using wealth to make better men. Government is beginning to be regarded not as an agency for the glorification of officials or for the maintenance of laws, but as an instrument for ameliorating and improving the conditions of human life. Our dramatists are presenting the claims of democracy and brotherhood. Our great cities have long been accustomed to various expositions, — horse shows, dog shows, flower shows, automobile shows, — but at last we have human welfare exhibits. The ancient stream of learning, gathered into the reservoirs of the institutions of culture, and flowing into the wonderful achievements of modern science, is finally discovering that along with many other subjects "the proper study of mankind is man." We begin to realize the reproach implied in the statement of a recent writer on ethics that "the things of greatest importance to human life have scarcely been touched as yet by science." He points out that "we know more about astrophysics than about health and disease; more about waste in steam

power than about waste in foods, or in education; more about classical archæology than about the actual causes of poverty, alcoholism, prostitution, and childlessness."

We are cultivating new extensions of sympathetic imagination. Any of us feels a deep shudder when we read the account of a child being hurt to death under a carelessly driven car, and we are beginning to feel revulsion that hundreds of little children should be stunted and maimed under existing conditions of child labor. We have always been horrified by the press reports of individual train wrecks, but we are learning to interpret the annual statistics of railroad and industrial accidents with something of the same horror and indignation. In the Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago, six hundred lost their lives. The newspapers flamed with the report. In that same month and in each month since, more than a thousand people died from preventable diseases in that city. Formerly these statistics were quietly tabulated by the officials and filed away in obscure records. But now these shocking facts are bulletined throughout the city and the newspapers print conspicuously every morning warnings and instructions concerning health. These

humane interests of our time are identical with the central purpose of Christianity. Little is gained by attempting to determine whether the religion of Jesus is altogether responsible for this new spirit. It is far more important to appreciate the fact that these movements are the fulfillment of the best hope and endeavor of the Church from its beginning. They are religious in the deepest sense. They are Christian in the most vital manner. When the Church turns its energies into such channels, it gains the consciousness of laboring at its natural, vital task. It becomes a world-transforming power not from without but from within; not by alien but by resident forces; not by magic or superstition but by law and light.

The second thing I wish to emphasize is the fact that social service generates religious feeling and conviction. Not only do these modern welfare movements constitute the fruits, the good works which Christianity requires as the test of genuine religion, but they also beget that inner disposition of the heart which has been magnified by evangelical Christianity.

It is a fundamental discovery of modern psychology that emotion accompanies voluntary activity. Feeling is generated by conduct. It

springs also from the anticipatory rehearsal of experiences. When we run over in imagination the dangers of an approaching journey or the pleasures of a promised vacation, we are in fact living through the events themselves. We think of ourselves in the midst of various situations and we act out incipiently, in truncated gestures and expressions, the parts we shall actually play. Accompanying this preliminary activity there is generated the emotional state appropriate to it. The intensity of the emotion is in direct relation to the vividness and tension of the imagined experience.

By this principle we may understand more fully the conditions and the processes by which religious awakenings occur. All spiritual awakening, every sound conversion, as it is called, has a history. Often it is only the climax that is noted, but the backlying conditions are equally important. In the days of the great revivals and acute conversions, an individual was prepared for the emotional crisis by a series of vivid, imaginative experiences. He was made to realize his evil conduct. He was drawn along the path of his wickedness until he felt the shame and disgrace of it. Then he was taken in reflection through the way

of the righteous and led to taste its peace and blessedness. Thus by an intense, often prolonged, conflict of contrasted activities and emotions, sinners were launched with mighty impetus, into the religious life. That became an unforgettable event. It loomed like a towering mountain-top above all ordinary moments.

But our matter-of-fact age has grown somewhat doubtful of that process. It seems artificial. Many persons sought it and never attained it. We now know that different types of persons "get religion" in different ways. It is more emotional for some than for others. The differences are quite comparable to those among people entering upon their profession or making changes in business. Out of a group of artists one finds some were started in their career by an emotional crisis, others by the influence of companionship, others by a gradual training and growth. But in the end they are all artists, masters of their technique, loyal to their tasks and warmed by the joy and satisfaction of achievement. The same is true of religious people. Just as persons become artistic by the direction of native talent into artistic activities, so persons become religious by participation in religious enterprises.

To share in the great characteristic human activities is to experience the fundamental human emotions. When a bachelor friend of mine married, he had no appreciation of children. He simply did not see them. But when his own child was born his eyes were opened to the charms of childhood. He entered into a new world and was as completely transformed in his sympathies and views of life as if he had been given a new nervous system.

A Japanese gentleman, not a Christian, was visiting Hull House one day. He saw the residents from the neighborhood passing in and out — foreigners of different nationalities, ragged little children, worn and troubled women, and humble laborers. All came with confidence, found a moment of companionship, secured a book, received a bit of neighborly advice, or some other help, and went their way again. Returning to the busy streets, in the midst of the noise and throngs, the Japanese suddenly plucked the sleeve of his American companion and in a tone of discovery, referring to the scene he had witnessed, said: "Ah, that is what you mean by the Christian spirit!"

In principle the spirit of religion is generated

precisely as the spirit of a game. If one does not play golf, the game lies quite outside one's feeling. The actions of the players are uninteresting and, maybe, entirely absurd. The golf literature and the golf symbols are unattractive and meaningless. But if one mingles with enthusiasts for the game, hears it praised by intelligent men, and allows himself to be drawn into a few games under favorable circumstances, then his interest kindles, his emotions stir, and he becomes a convert to golf. He may be surprised at himself, at his seeming passivity in the experience. He scarcely knows how the change took place, but his eager devotion and his increasing interest in all that belongs to his new sport are sufficient evidence of the genuineness of the change wrought in him.

Is not the same principle operative in religion? When one engages in its social enterprises, its benevolences, its missions, its humanitarian endeavors, under favorable circumstances, does not one feel the kindling idealism and enthusiasm of the true religious spirit? Perhaps if the Church were as determined and resourceful in cultivating the active habits of social service, as she has been in conducting "revivals," the flame of the religious life would leap higher than ever before

and be far more illuminating. Jesus summoned men to follow Him in his life of service. Their willingness to join Him in the good deeds He wrought was enough to admit them to his company. He trusted this practical test to the utmost. He formulated the principle of a sane and objective challenge when He said, "He that wills to do God's will, shall know of the doctrine."

The third fact I briefly mention is that by its devotion to social service Christianity is gaining a new apologetic — an apologetic which the man in the street may quickly comprehend. The practical programme of religion combines with other influences to supplant the older theoretical and dogmatic vindications of Christianity. We are no longer acutely convinced and persuaded by arguments concerning the fundamentals of the older theology — miracles, inspiration, future punishment, and the rest; but we are sensitive and responsive to a religion which opens schools in India, hospitals in China, and neighborhood centers along the coast of Labrador — which creates institutions of learning, of health, of comradeship and hope in all the dark places of the earth.

Besides, the layman is able to appreciate the

service which he can render in religion so applied. Heretofore the layman has often hesitated to pass judgment or to engage in activities in the sphere of religion because it seemed to belong to the clergy. But the new direction of effort has made secular talents sacred by devoting them to noble ends. All labor which improves society, lessens its injustice, increases its happiness and refinement is thereby sanctified. In this larger service of man, the lawyer, the teacher, the mechanic finds his task idealized and spiritualized. Even the minister discovers that he can no longer adequately fulfill his office by the disciplines which have conventionally equipped the clergyman. He is therefore seeking efficiency and authority for his calling through what have long been regarded as the secular sciences of medicine, pedagogy, civics, and business administration. Surely, in a time when churchmen are striving for the skill of lay experts, those experts should be better able to realize how well equipped they are by means of their own specialities, to work the works of God.

It is these works of humanitarian Christianity which are teaching the masses of the people the true understanding of Jesus Christ, and drawing

them together in a great spiritual comradeship. No doctrinal interpretation or defense is so convincing as actual works of love and sympathy. Everywhere in distant lands the missionaries are met by the astonishment of non-Christians that the white man should leave his home and go so far to heal the sick and tell good news of peace and goodwill. The marvel of that unselfish service is the strongest appeal of Christianity abroad and at home. It is unanswerable and irresistible. Those who engage in it are conscious of common ties binding them in a mystic communion far above all sects and parties. They experience in simple and tangible ways the great realities of the religion of Christ. They best know the divine nature, for God is love. They enter deepest into the fellowship of the apostles, a fellowship of suffering for the redemption of the race. They attain the most substantial satisfactions of life, for Jesus proclaimed not merely a rule of his own faith, but a law of life itself when He said, "He that would be the greatest among you, let him be the servant of all."

This ideal of social service is filling the Church with new hope. It is attracting stronger men into her ministry. It is producing new hymns and a

new spirit of worship. It is affording a new conception of church membership as an active participation in the growing kingdom of God on earth. It is an ideal full of practical deeds and of sweet reasonableness, but full also of the romance and mystery of the infinite life manifesting itself in the will and purposes of men.

THE JOY OF JESUS

THE JOY OF JESUS

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. *John* xv, 11.

A NOTABLE characteristic of the religious thought of our time is the more intimate and sympathetic understanding of the personality of Jesus. We have long been familiar with his official titles of prophet, priest, and king; and with his theological designations as the Son of God, the Logos, and the Saviour of the world. We have dwelt upon certain features of his earthly life, his temptation, his hunger and thirst, his suffering and sorrow and sacrificial death. Men have made bold to emphasize various traits of his character which bring Him into still closer and more vital relation with our common humanity. Not only have they dwelt upon his patience, self-restraint, capacity for friendship and heroism, but we read of his love of nature, his use of exaggeration, his anger, his ignorance on certain subjects, and there is more than one book devoted exclusively to the humor of Jesus. These studies are not irreverent or capricious, but are genuine, sympathetic attempts

to plumb the depths and ranges of the ever-fascinating, many-sided character of Christ.

Much has been written, too, about the joy of Jesus, but usually it has been conceived as an unnatural joy — the joy of self-renunciation, of silent but highly self-conscious suffering. It has seldom been set forth as the joy of a robust, eager soul, rejoicing in the energy of youth, in the voluntary choice of a great task and in the intellectual discovery of spiritual realities. But the more searching inquiries of recent scholarship encourage such an interpretation of the joy of Jesus. Certain it is they do not represent Him as primarily a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. That particular designation was derived from the Old Testament prophet, and does not express Jesus' own thought of Himself. The early disciples and the Church in subsequent ages very naturally magnified the passion and death of Jesus, but it is not in keeping with all we know of Him to think that through life he held before Himself the consciousness of death upon the cross. It is, indeed, quite possible that his buoyant optimism obscured for a considerable time his realization of the deadly opposition forming against Him, and that only gradually did He per-

ceive the full purpose of his enemies. The very depth and vividness of his enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God might well have made difficult any anticipation of the culminating tragedy of his ministry.

It is important to remember that words cannot mean one thing in daily experience and another in religion, if we are ever to come to an understanding with reference to our most ideal interests. The joy of Jesus must be comparable to our own. It must mean the gratification of wants, the satisfaction of desires, the fulfillment of hopes, where there was uncertainty and real chance of failure. The particular things which yield pleasure to different men may be as various as collecting stamps and commanding armies, but they all have this in common: they supply some felt need. A man's joy reveals the kind of man he is. It shows his deepest craving. It uncovers the hot spot of his mind. Jesus was no exception. His character may be seen in his satisfactions. We have his own deliberate and conscious emphasis upon the joy He felt and which He desired to share with his disciples. He was approaching the great crisis. His mind was filled by thoughts of his mission. It was important that his disciples

make no mistake concerning the spirit and temper of his teaching. At that moment He surveyed his instruction, and exclaimed: "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

I wish to consider this happiness of Jesus as it is manifested in his natural impulses, in his devotion to a great task, and in the play of his imagination as he interpreted and projected the meaning of his gospel. We have come to have greater respect for our natural appetites and impulses. The instincts have attained new dignity in the eyes of science and philosophy. They are regarded as the raw materials, the vital stuff, out of which our lives develop. The energy and sensitivity of these elemental impulses make life urgent and warm. They contribute a vibrant, tender beauty to all young life. They furnish the dynamics of the organized habits of manhood. The presence of this original quality and flavor of youth is unmistakable. It cannot be simulated and it cannot be disguised. This quality shines through all the words and gestures of Jesus. He thereby stands in striking contrast with the hardened old age of his nation. He moves with the strong, sinewy step of a vigorous man. There is a

fresh, persuasive note in his speech which the people at once detect. "They were astonished at his teaching," the record runs, "for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." This authority was doubtless the expression, in part at least, of the unworn energy of his youth.

Jesus was perfectly conscious that He was no ascetic and that his frank acceptance of the natural appetites and affections constantly brought Him under criticism. The difference between Him and John the Baptist, in this respect, was readily observed. Jesus declared, "John came neither eating nor drinking and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Jesus mingled freely in the social life about Him. One commentator remarks that "there is no record in the New Testament of his ever having declined an invitation," and adds, "His habit in this respect is illustrated by his presence at the marriage at Cana of Galilee, the feast at Matthew's house, the house of Simon, the dinner given Him by the Pharisees, and the supper given by Mary and Martha."

There are other evidences of his instinctive delight in natural things. He had a fresh, sensuous joy in the open fields and in the solitudes of the mountains. The flowers held his eye, and their transient beauty impressed Him with the marvelously intimate care of God. He had a peasant's love of nature and it was his habit to escape into her silences for poise and vision. He felt the blue waters of the Lake of Galilee carry Him caressingly into peace and rest.

This deep mystical passion for the free life of the hills was only equaled by his love of the prophetic innocence of childhood. One led Him into a consciousness of divine providence, and the other to the spirit of his coming kingdom — a kingdom constituted by pure and teachable souls. Thus the powerful impulses of his nature determined his outlook upon the world. There was about Him, even in his subdued moments, the unspent nervous force of a strong man, interpreting life through his own creative personality. His gesture frightened the money-changers from the temple. He felt able to exert the power of legions of angels. One grain of his faith would remove mountains. The very words He uttered seemed eternal. He feared neither violence nor death.

Even if He were crucified He would have strength to rise again, and the company of his disciples — his Church — He would build upon the rock of his mighty spirit so securely that the very gates of hell could not prevail against it.

May we not thus think, with reverence, of the consciousness of power born of the natural instincts within him? Does not some measure of that power sweep through the soul of any one of us, in some moments of our lives? Are not these the hours of our visions, our awakenings, our illuminations? Are not these the precious moments of the mystic when he seems to transcend the limits of ordinary knowledge and catch glimpses of God's very essence?

In such passionate moments, the bounds of logical thought seem passed, and routine habits cast off. These may be the channels of what we call inspiration, through which, if we are scientists we make discoveries; if we are artists, we arrive at new beauty; if we are prophets, we gain new revelations — the channels through which, no matter what we may be, we feel the passionate and elemental joy of life.

The joy of Jesus may further be viewed in respect to his task. When the seventy returned tri-

umphantly from the first mission upon which He sent them, his exultation was intense. "In that hour," the narrative tells us, "Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." "And he turned to his disciples and said, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see these things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

We can scarcely exaggerate the emotion of Jesus at that moment. For generations his nation had cherished the hope of an awakening and a deliverance. Some still looked for it in outward power and pomp, in the coming of a grand king like David. But Jesus cherished a wiser hope, caught, perhaps, from the prophet Isaiah, nourished by gentle spirits like the aged Simeon, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. This hope was for one to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to give them that mourn beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

These were the very words Jesus took for a text in the first discourse of his public ministry. This was the message He enjoined the seventy to preach, for in every city they were to heal the sick and say, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. It was the first great venture upon the long-cherished hope of the more spiritual patriots of his people. How would the message be received? What response would the people make? No wonder Jesus felt a thrill of ecstasy when the seventy returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us."

There was something ancestral, something massive and corporate uttering itself in this response of the people. It was the ancient national spirit rising to prophetic speech once more. But the keen satisfaction of that moment was yet to be deepened and mellowed by relentless opposition and persecution. The officials of the existing order blocked the progress of Jesus. Their anger and hatred grew as they saw the crowds increasing round Him. And here is just the point at which we have been most mistaken about the emotional experience of Jesus.

We have witnessed the contest between Jesus and the Pharisees too much in the attitude of

casual observers. We have been like timid, unseeing persons witnessing an athletic contest. The players rush into the scrimmages, tense and determined. They collide, and fall, and struggle. They rise, bruised and bloody. Some are carried off the field. We say, Poor fellows, how they suffer! What pitiful lives they live! How depressed and melancholy they must be, having always to be in training, to struggle, and endure, that others may enjoy the fruits of their vicarious sacrifice. How false is such an impression. How it misses the whole experience of the players. They are really at the height of keenest pleasure. They are the bearers of the college colors and the college spirit. They are unconscious of the blood and dirt. The blows and cuts are mere stings and scratches, and they rush back into line full of the glory of their cause and the hope of victory.

Or we may think of the patriot marching to battle. It is terrible, but it is grand. To the observer, he fronts hardships and danger and death. For himself, he has a cause at heart. Into the thick of the fight he goes with the challenge of the moral universe upon him. He is beyond all thought of any other joy in the undivided energy he gives to this.

I think it was so with Jesus. The scattered, shepherdless souls of his countrymen stirred his compassion. He espoused their cause against the injustices, hypocrisies, and vices by which they were burdened. Every opposition He encountered awakened new resources within Him and heightened the importance of his task. To the observer He was abused, belied, mocked, scourged, and crucified. To Himself he was the ardent, faithful, deathless champion of a glorious kingdom. We enter most intimately into his emotions when we think of Him as committed to a great moral adventure in which the spiritual destiny of the race hung in the balance. No one knew in advance, not even Jesus Himself, what the outcome would be. No one knew the day nor the hour, nor the manner of the end. That is the only kind of a situation which elicits genuine feeling. No contest awakens interest where the strife is unreal, where the forces are known to be unevenly matched, or where one side has some unnatural advantage. If Jesus had been as spectral and magical a person as some have thought, He could not have been even a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; but with a nature truly like our own, only mightier and holier and sincerely devoted to the vast

enterprise of human redemption, He could only be what He Himself said He was, a man of joy. For the building of a race of righteous men is the noblest possible adventure, and he who gives himself to it is sure of greater satisfactions than gladiators or warriors achieve.

It was the hope of Jesus that this joy might be shared by his disciples and that their joy might be full. They could experience it by the same fearless and unmeasured devotion to the betterment of humanity. Every man who has in any way joined in this moral adventure of Christianity knows what the Master meant. The astonishing thing is that so many people have never made this discovery of the satisfactions of strenuous moral endeavor. We are eager enough for pleasure, but we seem blind to the means of its attainment. We are evermore seeking it for itself, while all of the psychologists and philosophers insist that we should heed the paradox that it is only found where it is not sought. It is the elusive blue bird which we seek far and wide, only to find it in kindly deeds at our own lowly fireside. And it escapes us even there the moment we become too conscious of it. When we try to hold it in our hands and stroke it, it flies out of the window.

There must be some hardihood about our moral adventures; some distant objective, some forgetfulness of self. The chances for a thrilling good time are overwhelmingly on the side of the Lady of the Decoration, as against my lady of comforts, dwelling securely at home in the lap of luxury.

Mr. Chesterton declares that "the thing called high spirits is possible only to the spiritual." "Ultimately," he says, "a man can enjoy nothing but religion." You remember the contrast he draws between Jesus Christ and Omar Khayyam in the use of wine. "Jesus Christ made wine not a medicine, but a sacrament. But Omar makes it not a sacrament, but a medicine. He feasts because life is not joyful; he revels because he is not glad. 'Drink,' he says, 'for you know not whence you come nor why. Drink, for you know not when you go nor where. Drink, because the stars are cruel and the world as idle as a humming top. Drink, because all things are lapsed in a base equality and an evil peace.' So he stands, offering us the cup in his hand. And at the high altar of Christianity stands another figure, in whose hand also is the cup of the vine. 'Drink,' He says, 'for the whole world is as red as this wine, with the crimson of the love and wrath of God. Drink, for

the trumpets are blowing for battle and this is the stirrup-cup. Drink, for this is my blood of the New Testament that is shed for you. Drink, for I know of whence you come and why. Drink, for I know of when you go and where."

But the joy of Jesus was not merely instinctive exuberance, nor was it only self-forgetfulness in a huge task. His impulsive energy and powerful will expressed themselves also in the luminous play of a clear, discerning intellect. He has sometimes been classed as a successor of the wise men or sages of his race, rather than as a priest or prophet. But He never gives the impression of a love for purely speculative wisdom. His reflection issues from the deep moral need He sees about Him. His ideas are warm and urgent with human interest. They are concrete and visualized, yet definite and organic. His thought moves with the quick, free action of a mind ready and at ease.

He had no fear of knowledge, but welcomed it as an essential of his religion. "Wisdom is justified of her children," He declared. Again He said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." So thoroughly did He trust man's natural reason, that He asked the common people why they could not discern the moral

signs of the time with some such certainty as they detected signs of rain or fair weather. "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

His own mind held clearly the great moral distinctions and values of life. He never confused anise, mint, and cummin with the weightier matters of the law — judgment, mercy, and faith. He saw that some of the Ten Commandments are more important than others, and without hesitation asserted that love to God and love to man are the two commandments upon which hang all the law and the prophets. With the same deep penetration He gave morality a new dimension when He arraigned the traditional standards, saying, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you — Love your enemies."

Jesus also saw clearly the action and reaction of psychical attitudes and moral dispositions among people. He warned his disciples that they

would be judged by their own manner of judging and that according to their own measure would others measure back to them. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

At times the illustration of this principle rose to a touch of humor, as when He asked, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

We sometimes encounter minds which seem endowed with a special gift for mathematical forms and formulas. They move to the heart of a problem with facile and sure intuition, while other men are confused and heavy in their number processes. In some such contrast Jesus stood to many with whom his conversations are preserved to us. His interpretation of a moral situation separates the gold from the dross so that all right-minded men perceive the distinction. It was often so when they tried to trap Jesus into some embarrassing admission; for example, when

they inquired about taxes, and He answered by the image and superscription of the tribute money, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." And again when they questioned whether He should heal a man on the Sabbath, He pointed to their own willingness to rescue a sheep from a pitfall on the Sabbath, and remarked, "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep?"

With the same precision He disclosed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who strained at gnats of legalism and swallowed camels of actual sin. They made clean the outside, but within were full of extortion and excess.

But it was, perhaps, in the contemplation of the growth of his kingdom that He experienced the keenest satisfactions. He saw through the seeming paradox of its inner law. And when his disciples came to Him still confused by the illusions of worldly power and rank, and by the conception of advancement through influence and favoritism, He answered that in the kingdom of true morality and righteousness it was not so, but that He that would be the greatest must be the servant of all. This kingdom, therefore, enlarges itself from within and by processes which

are beyond the comprehension of selfish men. It communicates itself like the leaven hidden in the meal; it grows like the tiny mustard seed from small beginnings to great proportions; it is like secret treasure for which, when they discover it, men sell all the outward goods they possess.

Those who seek first this kingdom find all the qualities which are effective in this present world, for they must be faithful and honest and industrious and pure. Such men are not harassed by anxious thought for the outward goods. They are of untroubled hearts in the midst of the strife and clamor of the world, and they enjoy a peace which passeth all understanding of the selfish mind.

It was with this farseeing insight that Jesus faced the cross. "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." That intellectual conviction transformed the cross — and the glory of that transformation has been made brighter as men have grown to understand it more adequately.

It was such joy as this which Jesus craved for his disciples, a joy so natural and spontaneous that it already throbs in the unspoiled impulses of children and of virtuous men; a joy so virile and cumulative that it rises with the great-

ness of the moral task undertaken; a joy so sane and intelligible that it unfolds its logic to every pure and teachable mind.

Unfortunately, the disciples of Jesus have not always entered fully into this joy. They have often caught the serious summons of the Master with Puritan rigor, but without his full confidence in life. They have put on sackcloth and ashes when they might well have worn the wedding garment. They have sometimes made the high day of religion gloomy and stern and forbidding, when in its proper spirit it is a day of noble fellowship and song.

We are this week entering upon the season of Lent. Let us not deceive ourselves by thinking we are religious because we are sad of countenance and quiet in manner. We should be sad when we reflect upon our lives, if we find that they are not religious. Our grief is necessary, not because we are keeping company with Christ, but because through misapprehension, or carelessness, or perversion of spirit, we have wandered away from Him. If we truly enter into his life, we shall find Him buoyant where outward circumstances made us think Him broken in spirit; we shall find Him silent in the presence of threatening death,

not because He is afraid or confounded, but because already He sees the future with a vision that none of his disciples — much less Pilate or the priests — can share.

Easter is the true objective of Lent, for at Easter religion comes forth again with festival and song, with drama and pageant. Then the true disciples of Christ raise aloft the cross, not as the emblem of pain and defeat, but as the sign of victory and immortal life. Then they experience what Jesus meant when He said, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." *Heb.* XII, 1, 2.

THERE is something deeply human in this reference to the presence of other people as a reason for strenuous moral endeavor. It is almost disconcerting to be so frankly urged to be good because one is being observed. Yet there is no denying the fact that our neighbors' opinions are mighty goads to good actions and powerful deterrents from evil. We do not always admit it. We are, indeed, seldom conscious of the extent to which it is true. There is often an avowal of disinterested, independent devotion to truth and honor, while all the time one is really controlled and guided by the attitudes and expressions of the persons standing by. Every normal human being lives in this medium of social stimulation and control, as a fish lives in water or a bird in air.

It has always been so. The helplessness of human infancy determines every individual to an

intimate dependence upon others for several of the most impressionable years. There can be no infant Robinson Crusoe all alone on a desert island. And by the time a Robinson Crusoe is able to maintain himself in solitude, he is already formed and fashioned under the eyes of many witnesses. The approval and censure of the family circle, of playfellows and of various kith and kin, establish the core of his code of conduct. As a child, seeing a shining vase upon the table, impulsively puts out a hand to touch it, and then, with the hand poised in air, turns to search the mother's face for permission to proceed, so human beings are always casting side glances to ascertain the opinions of the spectators. It is noticeable that people are frequently more careful about their front yards, which the public may see, than they are with the back yards. We quite naturally agree that it is more important to have the street side of the house of better material or to keep it especially well painted and repaired. We thus pay tribute to the sentiments of others. Without this environing human presence, we are like sailors who have no compass and cannot see the stars. The most ordinary moral judgments lose their meaning when the individual is cut off

from his fellows. Every one knows, for example, that in dealing with others it is wrong to cheat, but a student recently asked in all seriousness whether it is immoral to cheat in solitaire.

The moralists identify the growth of ethical sentiment in an individual with the growth of his knowledge of the judgment of his associates. As one writer says: "There is often a lack of sharp condemnation of ourselves as long as our sins remain private; we are aware of the sinfulness in a general way; conscience gets in a timid voice, especially just at the time of commission of the deed, and more timidly each time that it is committed; but there may be no lively emotional reaction, no great agitation of remorse, no desperate attempts to justify one's self by argument, no call to repentance. But let it once come out; then his nature asserts itself. The sense of publicity immediately reacts upon his own private standards of judgment." He then sees himself as others see him and the profound emotions of self-condemnation sweep over him. Similarly, a man's sense of the value of virtue, of strict honor and integrity, is heightened and strengthened by the recognition and approval of others.

It is this great universal fact of our moral

experience which the text employs. It implies also that one may select and enlarge the cloud of witnesses in imagination and keep them before the mind when they are no longer accessible in physical presence. These witnesses which the inner eye beholds serve as supports and guides when a man's actual companions are inadequate, or when they might tyrannize over his will and hinder his most ideal achievements.

The possession of such a company of ideal companions is a distinctly human characteristic. Out of sight, out of mind, is the fate of the lower orders of life, and it was only gradually that the memory of man lengthened to include the names and deeds of any individuals beyond a generation or two. It was the development of language and the accumulation of traditions and records which enabled man to draw away from the narrow world of other animals, and guide himself by the achievements of many individuals remote in time and place. The recital of the deeds of the great names of Israel's past, as given in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, is a typical expression of the way in which the race brought its lengthening memory to bear upon the conduct of the individual. Here are arrayed with dramatic vividness and individ-

uality the ancestral heroes of the faith. Some of them, like Abel, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob move upon the shadowy borders of mythology and folklore. Others stand in the light of history — David, Samuel, the prophets, and the great company of the nameless champions of faith. All of them exemplify the power of faith — "through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

They endured as seeing the invisible. It was the cultivation of this ability to transcend the present moment and live in intimate companionship with the past which contributed to the intensity of religious life among the Jews. They thus created and transmitted a rich heritage of national idealism which has marvelously resisted changes of environment and all manner of outward misfortunes. By impressing the stories of their early heroes upon the minds of the children, they fortified one generation after another against alien standards and kept them loyal to the race ideals.

Besides, it was possible in this way to cherish only those traits of the former generations which contributed to the ideal ends desired. There were many characters whom it was advantageous to forget. Thus the process of selection was constantly at work, not so much by deliberate or conscious determination as by the attraction of a common purpose. The dauntless spirit of the race, especially in time of disaster, attracted to itself the like-minded characters of the past and thereby confirmed its hope and fixed more securely that type of mind for the future.

It was lack of continuity in their outward history which forced the Hebrews to maintain with rigor and devotion, the inner spirit and mental pictures of their past. This tendency preserved the soul of the nation after its institutions were broken and humbled. It has enabled the faithful Jews for thousands of years to preserve their racial identity and to endure contempt and disaster as no other people has done. No other has shown so much tenacity of ancient ideals through such calamities and opposition. And this has been due to the fact that with deep moral earnestness and unflagging zeal, the imagination of every child has been infused with the idealized characters

of the long line of national heroes. These characters have had the quality of life and the intimacy of deepest sentiment. They have been better known and more devotedly obeyed than the visible companions of the hour. They have been the invisible keepers of the conscience and the honor of the generations which have cherished them.

It was this habit of mind which became one of the greatest contributions of Judaism to Christianity. So long as the Christians were scorned and persecuted by their contemporaries, they were forced to secure approval and spiritual companionship in imagination with the Old Testament heroes or with the celestial company of the apostles and martyrs. The doctrine of the heavenly existence which Christianity emphasized, gave a new field for the imagination and incalculably strengthened the hearts and wills of the faithful. Why should they be disheartened by the disdain of Roman governors and the ridicule of common soldiers when they were conscious of the sympathetic presence and encouragement of their exalted King and his mighty cohorts? It was thus a simple matter for the early Christians to employ the long accustomed usage of the Hebrew mind and to enlarge and idealize the grand com-

pany of its heroes by adding the living, though invisible, spirits of their dead. Here was secured a more powerful and vivid aid to the imagination, inasmuch as the great souls whose approval one craves are not merely in the past but are living witnesses, just barely removed from sight, quick and sensitive to our mortal strife.

Christianity has here availed itself of a very natural and universal tendency of the mind, to feel toward the absent ones something of the same respect and affection which they elicited when actually present. Among primitive people the dead are felt to be active and influential and hover about their homes and associates with awe-inspiring presence. Christianity has enhanced that view and qualified it with a moral principle, for it is now the righteous dead whose presence the Christian contemplates and whose approval he regards.

The Church has magnified this mystic host of the heavenly world and has encouraged the most vivid imagery with reference to the saints ranged above us intent in contemplation of our moral conflict. Their sympathy and inspiration are often felt to be the most powerful incentives to our noblest endeavors.

"How should we bear our life
Without the friendship of the happy dead?"

runs the sentiment of a recent mystical poem by Miss Evelyn Underhill.

"They see
The steadfast purpose of eternity.
Their care is all for us: they whisper low
Of the great heritage
To which we go.
As one may tell a child of tender age
Of manhood and its joys,
They from our toys
Call us to contemplation of the light.
We, all unknowing, wage
Our endless fight
By ghostly banners led,
By arms invisible helped in the strife.
Without the friendship of the happy dead
How should we bear our life?"

This is the theme of many of the noblest hymns of the Church, reminding us of those —

"Who, from the battlements above,
Follow our course with eager love,
And cheer our contest on."

The first great step in the idealization and spiritualization of human life, then, we may say, is this release of man from his immediate environment and the reference of his conduct to the great lives of the past and to the heavenly company of

those who have died in the faith. But all this may occur within the unmodified tradition of the past. The individual who accepts this heritage and lives in obedience to it possesses indeed a larger and richer inner life than one whose conscience had no such historical and celestial perspective. But for all that, it may be a life which is bound to precedent, subject to the authority of tradition and quite wholly given to imitation and acquiescence. If we lived in a changeless, intellectual world, that type of religion might be sufficient, but in a growing social order where different historical traditions are often in conflict, something more is needed. To many minds of our modern world the original Hebrew tradition and its modified form in historic Christianity scarcely supply the full satisfaction demanded. That tradition is at least called upon to meet other traditions in a new way. The assertion of its truth, its antiquity, the number of its adherents cannot answer the deeper questions which many sincere minds are asking. Where and how, then, may a sincere soul of this day determine what cloud of witnesses to invoke? Here is a modern man who makes his appeal to the Greek worthies. Auguste Rodin, in his brochure "To the Venus

of Melos," says of his experience with Greek art: "In the Louvre, of old, like saints to a monk in his cloister, the Olympian gods said to me all that a young man might usefully hear; later they protected and inspired me; after an absence of twenty years, I found them again with an indescribable joy, and I understood them. These divine fragments, these marbles, older than two thousand years, speak to me louder, move me more than human beings."

Another man of Western culture makes his home in Japan and comes to believe profoundly in the moral and artistic ideals of that land and makes himself a kind of missionary of Japanese art and culture. A third man of our Anglo-Saxon world is fascinated with life in India and becomes a devotee of theosophy, which he commends to us with zeal and earnestness. It is also possible to meet men among us who have come to know intimately the social control, the proverbial wisdom, and the ceremonial customs of the tribes of Central Africa, or of Australia, and who are dubious about the claims of our culture and our religion, in comparison. Not only are we experiencing this contact of various cultures with their differing standards and ideals, but within our

own society there are numerous claimants for allegiance. There is a certain type of scientist who like Darwin, may have given himself to his observations of facts and the formulations of hypotheses and generalizations, until he has no interest in poetry and the symbolic idealizations of life which characterize art and religion.

With all these there is also present the practical man of affairs who may or may not elaborate the theory which his conduct suggests. He works as if life had its charm and justification in utilitarian efficiency and skill. He sees the power of wealth and a certain respect which it elicits even from those devoted to other ideals, and he concludes that at least all men in middle life see the wisdom of his course and tacitly admit that worldly success and material goods are among the most important possessions possible to men.

This is not the first age of the world in which such a conflict of traditions has occurred, and in which a civilization has had its traditions deeply challenged. It happened so among the Greeks at the time of the Sophists; and among the Romans in the age of the decline of the empire when a great number of Oriental cults struggled with Judaism and Christianity for supremacy. But there is this

difference in our time. The wide diffusion of knowledge makes the problem vital to more people. It is as though for the masses of men there appeared within the field of mental vision not only the cloud of witnesses which their own traditional culture affords, but also those vast companies of the saints of other faiths, vigorous in devotion to their beliefs and equally ready to encourage and crown any who will fight under their banners.

It is analogous to the perplexity of a person who removes from a relatively simple community into the maelstrom of a great city. In the smaller town he has acquaintances on every side, whom he meets freely. His labors and his recreations are part of their own life. He feels quickly their praise or blame. He is held to the moral standards of his class and group by the simple and direct operation of public opinion. But in the city there is a great multiplicity of social sets — clubs, lodges, associations, and guilds. The street on which he lives is no longer a neighborhood, the business associates he encounters have little common life outside of business. A great wealth of organizations offer their ideals and companionships, but the old habits and traditions of the

smaller community afford little rational guidance in the new, bewildering life. He has lost the intimate connection with the old cloud of witnesses before whom he felt the values of life decisively and urgently, while among the confused and discordant multitudes of the metropolis no one at first seems to care whither he goes. No one assumes responsibility for his direction.

In some similar way the modern mind has found itself in spiritual bewilderment in the presence of many voices. It is unavailing merely to reassert the old authority with greater vehemence and insistence. So far as the text offers a solution for this emergency, it is found in the exhortation to run the race with the eyes fixed, not upon the past, but upon the future; not upon the ancient heroes so much as upon the ideal man beyond. It is as though the course upon which the runner ran stretched away into a distance where the spectators could only follow by their eager vision and where they themselves had never actually run. One figure only had passed along that course, and that was the figure of Jesus Christ, who ventured beyond the ancient goals and opened a new and living way toward God.

In the New Testament Jesus appeared as one

who directed men beyond the old tradition. He was often in conflict with the ancient order. It was not sufficient for Him to know what was said by them of old time. He was free to say things radically different. And He did not offer Himself as another lawgiver or dictator. He proclaimed Himself rather as a friend and teacher, whose words rested not so much upon his own authority as upon experience. The truth itself would make men free. Others, coming after Him, would do greater things than Himself.

Jewish descent was not necessary in order to be a true son of Abraham. The God whom Jesus worshiped counted as true sons of Abraham only those who had faith like Abraham's — a faith for adventure and endurance, in the interest of a righteous cause. To Jesus any place was just as sacred as Jerusalem, if it were a place where men truly worshiped God.

St. Paul understood how new and untraditional the religion of Jesus was in this respect. He saw that a Jew is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, regardless of blood or any ceremonial. The apostle Paul repeated no conviction oftener or with greater emphasis than this, that in Christianity there is no

Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; that the old order had passed away, and behold all things are new!

It was, then, upon such a leader as this that the Jewish Christians were to fix their eyes as they ran their race, surrounded by the cloud of witnesses. When Jesus Christ is thus understood, He becomes an inspiring leader for an age in which the old traditions clash. He becomes the embodiment of the best elements of all the streams of culture in the race. The gentle Buddha, the wise Confucius, the earnest Mohammed are not repelled by Christ, but, like Moses and the prophets, receive through Him the vindication and fulfillment of the true spirit of their teaching. It is the fuller appreciation of this fact which is opening a new chapter in Christian missions. The Christian missionary no longer feels compelled to denounce *en bloc* all of these ancient revelations of God among the various peoples of the earth. On the contrary, he seeks in their sacred books for every Christ-like word, and is ready to employ at its full value every truly catholic text or parable of the New Testament Scriptures.

It is also this deep, free spirit of Christ which may guide one in the confusion which many ex-

perience in our scientific age. The so-called conflict between science and religion has its ground in narrow and superficial views of science and of religion. One is almost able to say that such a conflict no longer exists between minds of the first rank either among scientists or ministers. Christianity, at its best, in our day welcomes in the very name and spirit of Christ all the knowledge, all the investigation, all the genuine experimentation of science. And Christianity does this, not with the feeling that science works in an alien realm, but in the conviction that its problems lie at the very heart of its own task, the task, namely, of so understanding nature and life, God and the world and man, that it may be possible to build more rapidly and more securely a kingdom of righteousness and love and peace upon the earth. Religion needs the aid of science to abolish superstition and to refine the tools of progress; and science needs religion to keep alive the ideal meaning of all our tasks, and to make luminous and resplendent, the social, spiritual goal of all our labor.

When, therefore, the Christian, in the race he runs, looks forward to Jesus Christ, he should see in Him not an arbitrary mind, nor a barrier to

progress, but a free spirit, opening the course and himself urging all men ever onward in the way. This represents the ultimate emancipation of mankind. It was of profound importance to free men from the tyranny of the moment and from the bonds of immediate experience by extending the perspective of human life into the past and preserving there the great characters and deeds of history. But that achievement still made possible a fatal bondage — the bondage of tradition, of precedent, of a fixed standard.

The other emancipation, in which the human spirit especially rejoices to-day, is release from this slavery of tradition. Men feel themselves freer than ever before to accept from any culture of the past its rich treasure, without thereby becoming the devotees of all the elements of that culture, or forfeiting the right to accept the gifts of other peoples. One may now, at last, be both a Greek and a Jew, a scientist and a saint, a scholar and a Christian, in the deepest and best import of these terms.

And finally, it is some satisfaction to remind ourselves that the writer of the letter to the Hebrews realized that the cloud of witnesses he described were not themselves perfect. Those who

came after them were necessary to complete what the ancient heroes attempted — "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." It is doubtful whether the greatest men of the past ever desired their own words to be praised as the final statements of truth, or their deeds as the end of perfection. It is more frequently the desire of the parent that the child should accomplish finer and greater things. Every right-thinking man who is compelled to give up a task into which he has put his life is happy to see others carry it on, and he is doubly happy if by encouragement and approval he is able to assist them to surpass his own achievements. Nothing gives finer satisfaction to a teacher than to be outdone in his own specialty by his pupils.

It is the saving salt of human nature that this power of appreciation is greater than the power of creation. Men who are themselves weak and imperfect in moral achievement, may yet encourage others to better deeds. The earnest approval of good men by those less virtuous is a common thing, and such approval helps to make the good man better. As has been said, "If only those were allowed to uphold standards who had demon-

strated their ability to live up to them, how our reigning ideals would suffer." "Common enough is that mild predilection for the right which is equal to supporting some one else under temptation."

The cloud of witnesses is not, then, superfluous or cumbrous. They give zest to the contestants. Their own hopes and broken efforts yet await fulfillment. They are able to appreciate what they could not accomplish. Instead of restraining, they urge on the battle. Whose heart is not quickened in him when he takes up his daily task to think that there are those who care? Who is not strengthened against temptation, even in his solitude, when he recalls in memory a pure face looking into his? And who does not feel the stirring ardor in a company of human souls assembled in a quiet place of worship, striving together in their wills to find the way of life and to walk in it? Over them brood the spirits of the mighty dead, rank on rank massing themselves upward into the mystic amphitheater of memory and faith. Who does not respond to their presence by some new dedication of his being to the race they ran and to which they urge us on?

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about

with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith."

REGENERATION

REGENERATION

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." *John* III, 7.

THE sermon is the repetition of the last word — Ye must be born again, and again, and again. Some commentators observe that a stricter translation would be, "Ye must be born anew"; or, "Ye must be born from above"; but neither of these meanings is inconsistent with the idea of continuous regeneration or rebirth, which several understand the text to emphasize. The same thought often recurs, particularly in the letters of St. Paul. He writes to the Roman Christians, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"; and to the Ephesians, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind"; and to the Colossians, "Lie not to one another seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

In the history of Christianity this continuous regeneration has sometimes been displaced by the idea of a unique, cataclysmic spiritual experience,

known as conversion. As one is born into the natural world, so, it is contended, one must experience a second birth into the spiritual world. Whoever knows himself to have experienced this regeneration is a Christian and worthy to be a member of the visible church, while any one who has not felt this inner event remains outside the company of the saved. Great agitation arose in the early days of this country over the nature and necessity of the second birth. The Puritan fathers held strongly to the doctrine that the visible church should consist of none but evident Christians, and none were admitted to the adult membership of the churches who could not relate some instance of the transforming operation of God in their own lives. But their children, educated and trained in the Christian faith, moral and earnest in their lives, yet frequently could lay claim to no such experience as that which their parents had called a change of heart, and were not conscious of anything they could designate as the work of God in their souls. Consequently their right to membership in the church was called in question. The halfway covenant, as it was called, came into use during the seventeenth century. This covenant permitted such unregenerate members to

remain in the church, and entitled them to transmit church membership to their children, but it did not entitle them to partake of the communion. The ambiguities and perplexities of that practice, however, were not long endured. Its critics charged that the halfway covenant devitalized religion and scandalized the church. Jonathan Edwards denounced it and the course of strict orthodoxy clung to the doctrine of a regenerate church membership.

Essentially the same view of conversion and of the necessity of such a regenerate membership is still maintained in many churches, and for not a few whose theory of the world no longer includes original sin and miracles of grace, there yet survives the vague feeling that religion is only for those who are peculiarly gifted for it or have had it thrust upon them by some unusual experience. The consequence is that conscientious persons sometimes make pathetic efforts to find evidence in their lives of a divine visitation, and not infrequently attach undue importance to merely incidental and even grotesque phenomena. Thus in the great Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky at the beginning of the last century, men and women thought themselves spiritually transformed be-

cause, during the preaching and exhortations, they fell down in trances, or jumped about in muscular paroxysms, or became subject to what was called the "barking exercise." Others received their assurance in the form of visions and voices; flashes of light and dreams.

Equally pathetic have been the negative cases of those who sincerely sought some token but found none. They were not encouraged to attach religious importance to those natural impulses and awakenings which are the normal expressions of the spiritual tendencies of human nature, and were therefore forced, in spite of their moral earnestness and sincere sympathy with Christian ideals, to regard themselves as unregenerate and unfit for membership in the church. One still meets people who explain their aloofness from the Church by saying they never experienced the feeling which they consider as the primary requisite. They seem not to imagine that this "feeling" may be in any way within their control, subject to their own volition and dependent upon objective activities and natural relationships. Unfortunately in our common English version of the New Testament the appeal to become Christians is uniformly mistranslated, so that men

read that they are to "be converted"; whereas the verb so rendered is active and carries a summons to turn, or turn yourselves to God. "In the New Testament," says an authority, "conversion is always represented as man's act — an act of which he is capable under the appeal and influence of the truth."

It is difficult for men to attach the same spiritual importance to acts which they involuntarily perform and those which they deliberately initiate. Among primitive peoples an entirely disproportionate value is attributed to involuntary acts, such as talking in sleep, or raving in delirium. Sneezing, for example, is thought so evidently due to a seizure by some spirit that it is commonly followed by a salutation and prayer formula prescribed by custom. Something of this same reverence for passive states of feeling survives in the popular idea that unusual potency and meaning belong to spontaneous mental events and to ecstatic emotions.

It is at this point that modern psychology has made some of its most important contributions to the understanding of religion. It recognizes that the soul does experience awakenings, often intense and transforming, which are truly new

births, and it recognizes that these new births occur again and again and again. The period of youth is preëminently the time of great emotional crises, of conversions, of the attainment of insight and enthusiasm with reference to all racial and social ideals. It is the epoch in which the individual not only naturally becomes religious, but also patriotic and domestic and socially enlightened. Under anything like normal conditions, youth responds to the moods of nature, and to the appeals of the great institutions of society with a spontaneity and an inner compulsion which are among the most impressive and reassuring phenomena of human life. That is the time when men most readily volunteer in the service of their country; when they are willing to enter upon long and arduous apprenticeships for professions and business; when they are capable of stupendous deprivations and labors through romantic attachments; and when also they are most able to be enthralled by the vision of a kingdom of utter love and good will among men.

This initial experience may be crucial and decisive. It may give the set and curve to the whole aftercourse of life. Few persons take up new

interests, either ideal or practical, after the period of adolescence. It is notoriously difficult to form intimate friendships after that time. But even in youth these choices are seldom abrupt and momentary. They have been prepared for by gradual development, by ripening of powers, and by cumulative experiences. The records of religious awakenings show the influence of environment, of early training, of temperament and of direct suggestion. They vary as much with reference to the duration of the period of inquiry and suspense, and the manner of final decision, as do the choice of vocations and the formation of life partnerships. It is also a notable fact that a single conversion, however impressive and authentic it may seem to be, seldom gives a man complete satisfaction and security. Is not the literature of personal piety full of misgivings and apprehensions concerning the salvation of souls which once thought themselves redeemed, but have later become perplexed and confused? Do they not seek the repetition of the conversion experience, with its renewed sense of the divine presence and comfort?

When one compares religious life with intellectual development or with professional pursuits,

the successive stages in all of them seem quite similar. The first essential is the development of interest in a given direction. It is not so important how that interest awakens, if it be genuine and vital. It may arise from some other person's urgent persuasion, or from a book one has read, or from a character one has admired. The momentous question may be decided in a restless night of anxiety, or during a quiet walk by the seashore, or in a public assembly. There are endless variations of circumstance in connection with the decision to be a lawyer, a mathematician, a Christian. Probably most men could not give any clear account of the beginnings of their deepest interests. These interests have sprung from familiar associations and have grown strong in a congenial atmosphere without much introspection or conflict. The investigations of such experiences show that a painful or ecstatic beginning is no more a guaranty of a successful religious career than it is of a successful legal or scientific career.

But what is constantly emphasized in all great human characters is that they have continually met crises and tasks which elicited new powers, new manifestations of energy and talent. If the

realms of science and art are so vast and so complex that they confront the greatest geniuses with new levels and unsuspected areas to be possessed, it might be expected that religion, comprehending, as it does, all the ideal values and relationships of life, would also offer to common men and to spiritual geniuses likewise, perpetual regeneration and rebirth. In education, a student passes from grade to grade; from grammar school to high school; from high school to college; from college to the university and professional school, with every year opening new fields and demanding inner development and awakening. And at its best, life beyond the schools unfolds in epochs and opportunities, which, though less formally discriminated, are equally real and exacting. Religion ought also to be viewed in a similar perspective in order that there might be some reasonable gradation of spiritual tasks in the fulfillment of which a man might gain the consciousness of mastery and progress. Too many men who have graduated from college still possess only a kindergarten experience of religion. Strong men of affairs, who have made their way into large industries and technical arts, cannot be equally expert in religion without having lived in its

atmosphere and shared in its modern growing life. They may not know, for example, what the Modernist Movement is, or the new social religion which is permeating all the churches, or the mighty impetus toward federation and union in all denominations, or the awakening energy, under the stimulus of international contact, in the great world religions. Neither in the realm of personal piety, nor of religious theory, nor of objective charity and philanthropy have there ever been such reasonable and persuasive appeals to all classes of good and vigorous men to be born again into still larger religious life.

How, then, may we conceive definitely and cogently of this life of the spirit which summons us to perpetual regeneration? There are many ways of formulating it and of bodying it forth in symbol and in deed. I here choose three expressions for it, intending thereby to release and stimulate our thought of it, rather than to exhibit any set theory or formal pattern.

First, let us conceive the religious life as symbolized by Jesus Christ. We think of it, then, as loyalty to the principles He taught and the practice of such graciousness and such heroic idealism as He displayed. We cherish his faith and his

buoyant optimism. We see, with Him, a marvelous Providence in the laws of nature and in human history. We come to believe so profoundly in the spiritual qualities of human hearts that we see virtues and new moral possibilities in publicans and sinners. We pray for them that persecute us. We cultivate love for our enemies. We set before ourselves the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy, and we forego anxious thought for any external goods or worldly station.

When we sin, we think of Christ; how it dishonors Him; how tenderly He forgives us; and how He strengthens our wills for better things ahead. When life goes utterly against us, fortunes fail, hopes wane, and death waits — then, too, we lay hold on Christ, our comforter, our strength, and our immortal life.

All this and far more is Jesus Christ to the living heart of the Church. Men naturally think in personal terms, and the personality of Christ for these thousands of years has been the central figure in the moral and spiritual drama of millions of men. When they sinned against other men it was against Him too. When they achieved good works, it was by his help; and when they faced untried ways, He walked by their side. The

Church has made its ritual around the events of Christ's earthly life, — his birth, death, and resurrection, — and its hymns and prayers witness to his living presence in the imagination of the worshipers. Therefore, it is the simplest and most natural statement of what is meant by religion to say that it is the life of Christ reproduced in the lives of men. It is affection for Him, obedience to Him, and faithfulness to his spirit. One cannot miss the essential things of religion if he takes it in this way, always careful to appreciate the breadth and richness of Christ's teaching and the continuous development which it enjoins.

But it is possible also to define religion in quite different terms. One may say it is the acceptance of the standards and ideals of his family, of his teachers, and of the great characters of the day in which he lives. Many persons formulate their highest values in that way. They appropriate the practical precepts and moral principles, without the phraseology or forms of piety. There are doubtless excellent members of all churches who maintain this matter-of-fact attitude. They may have little capacity or taste for forms or for doctrinal statements. There are certainly numerous excellent Christians who have no musical knowl-

edge or skill, and it is conceivable that similarly many lack that vivid imagination and emotional power which the fullest use of symbolism and ritual involves. If, then, some individuals protest that their religion consists in doing the best they can to live a good life, according to the standards of the best men about them, that cannot lead them far astray. It is only necessary that they take themselves seriously in that position, and feel some moral urgency and responsibility for the actual realization of those ideals. No matter how adequate the theoretical formulation of religious standards may be, it is essential that they appeal to the will and thus lead on from one achievement to another. It is more important in religion that a man follow vigorously whatever ideals he may possess, provided they are live and growing ideals, than it is that he have superior theories of life without the will to pursue them. For when a person begins to take life seriously at any point, it has a marvelous way of leading him on and on through birth after birth, into fuller participation and into larger relationships.

A third possible statement of religion is that it emphasizes the spiritual qualities of all the great constructive interests of society and seeks to

organize them into an impressive and inspiring unity. Religion is thus viewed as the deepest reality in science, in art, and in social relationship.

The chief concern of science is the discovery and presentation of the truth; the great object of art is the vision and expression of beauty. The saving quality of business is integrity; the great quest of industry is efficiency, and the one essential of social organization is good will. Wherever men are engaged upon the great fundamental human interests, they are occupied with the vital things of religion. It is only in the vicious and whimsical and purposeless activities that religion does not appear, for it cannot exist together with the inconsistencies of evil wills, or with the caprice of insincere hearts. Religion, at its best, exalts the truth of science, the beauty of art, the integrity of business, the industry of labor and the companionship of love. It seeks the fullness of life. Unlike science or art or industry, it cannot be content with a part or with a fragment of the whole. It demands all of these together in a living organic unity of social action. And this unity is nothing forced or artificial. It is a natural unity which all human life craves. It is the oneness of family life, and it is the group con-

sciousness of the patriotic and loyal community taken as a whole. It is the function of religion to promote and symbolize this unity. The more specialized men's pursuits become, the more important is it to make clear the interdependence of all individuals in the common life and to attract each separate, solitary person into the fellowship of the ideal community.

In some such ways may religion be conceived, as loyalty to Jesus Christ, as fidelity to the inherited social tradition at its best, and as devotion to the inner spirit and meaning of special pursuits, taken in their natural implications. In all of these conceptions there is presented an ideal to be progressively realized by the ceaseless renewal and development of one's nature, and of the social order itself. This process need no longer be thought entirely unaccountable or mysterious. It takes place in ways which are more and more brought into relation with all experiences of intellectual enlargement and of the strivings of the will. So far from being exceptional, such awakenings are normal phenomena of all live and eager minds. In the natural course of events every individual is subject to many influences which offer him entrance into new life. By attention to these

and to the stirrings of his soul within him, he may learn how to take advantage of them for the refinement of his spiritual nature and the attainment of a more Christ-like stature.

The great life of Nature often draws men into moods and impulses where new and better worlds are made more easily accessible. The poets know how to convey the qualities of such moments. Thus one writes: —

"Perchance we first time really see a flower!
Some inward grandeur — unsuspect — makes cry!
Or other's nobleness enchains our view!
In such exquisitely informing hour
Earth's old futilities pass downcast by,
And life on sudden takes eternal hue."

Or, again, it is a great unselfish life silhouetted against some vast human need. Such was the influence which transformed Stanley when he found Livingstone in the heart of Africa. Stanley said: "For four months and four days I lived with him in the same hut, or in the same tent, and I never found a fault with him. I went to Africa a prejudiced man against religion, and the worst infidel in London. To a reporter like myself, who had only to deal with wars, mass meetings, and political gatherings, sentimental matters were quite

out of my province. But there came to me a long time of reflection. I was out there away from a worldly world. I saw this solitary old man there, and I asked myself, 'Why does he stop here? What is it that inspires him?' For months after we met I found myself listening to him, wondering at the old man carrying out the words, 'Leave all and follow me.' But little by little, seeing his piety, his gentleness, his zeal, his earnestness, and how he went quietly about his business, I was converted by him."

In conclusion I mention one of the most potent and penetrating influences for moral purification and renewal — the influence of a company of people brought together and dominated by an elevating appreciation and a noble purpose. It is experienced at times in listening to a great orchestra. The musicians have lived through the day quite as other men, worried by little practicalities, teaching difficult pupils, meeting creditors, racking their minds for some increment of comfort on the morrow. Individually, they bear the shifting fortunes of fate as best they can, often with disappointed ambitions, with doubts of themselves and of the world, with occasional half-holidays and their fitful joys. But now they are parts

of the orchestra. They are lifted out of themselves by the theme of the symphony and are carried by the very harmony they create into an ideal world of beauty and mystery. And that diviner world opens also, in some measure, for all who hear what the musicians feel. Fatigue and ennui, selfish cares and petty apprehensions are forgotten. For the time, the hard lines relax and one of the great "melting moods" radiates as by one impulse through all hearts.

Something like that is often achieved for us by religion. It gathers our weak and wavering human natures around the ancient altars of faith and aspiration. It sounds out the great notes of forgiveness, of encouragement, of divine companionship and spiritual renewal. It elevates the symbols of sacrificial love and of immortal hope. The invisible and eternal things, at other times often obscured and forgotten, are now brought near and made real again. Every man who sincerely yields himself to the influences of these hours of worship feels himself quickened and ennobled. In such moments the gates of new life open and we are born again.

RELIGION AS THE QUEST FOR LIFE

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And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. *Gen.* III, 9.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life. *Rev.* XXII, 2.

It is significant that in the first and last books of the Bible, the tree of life has a central place. It stands in the midst of the Garden of Eden and of the heavenly paradise. Religion throughout its history is just the quest for life — sometimes life on a physical plane, in basket and in store, in flocks and fruits of the field, but also at times life which is more than meat. In early Hebrew tradition, Abraham moved out from his ancestral place into a far country, seeking a freer and richer life. Moses, summoning the tribes of Israel, led them toward a more fruitful country, toward a land flowing with milk and honey. Jesus leads onward in the same great quest and from his heart bursts the cry: "I have come that ye may have life and have it more abundantly."

—The deepest thing in all human experience is precisely this craving for self-fulfillment, self-satisfaction. It is this which has stirred the race from its earliest infancy. It is this which pulses now in the life of nations. It is this which makes us labor, suffer, and aspire. This quest for life is the deepest, divinest thing in us, and in its intensest, most ideal form, it is the very heart and soul of religion. Everything religious is to be interpreted in terms of this craving. Many people take religion mechanically, externally, institutionally, without any understanding of its inner, pulsing spirit. But none of the deeds or doctrines, or forms of worship can be at all understood in their real meaning except as the expression of this will to live, this ceaseless, indomitable instinct for life. In the successive ages of man, in the gigantic struggles which history records, it is hunger for the bread of life which throbs at the heart of primitive and of spiritual religions.

Consider deeds. The great question which men are always asking is, "What must we do to inherit life," or, "What must we do to be saved?" The deeds of religion are developed in terms of this desire. In the early Hebrew religion, it was a matter of cultus. One must observe customary

rites, such as sacrifice. One must keep the traditions and observe the institutional forms.

In the time of the great prophets, this mechanical, external cultus was held not to be sufficient. Sacrifices and the observation of mere forms of worship were felt to be hindrances and abominations. They asked themselves the simple, heart-searching question: "What does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

When Jesus was asked in his time what a man must do in order to gain life, He gave very simple answers: Love your neighbor, give to the poor. Cultivate gentleness and kindliness, for the world suffers because of selfishness, hatred, and narrowness of heart. Life for each and all is to be found in an attitude of neighborliness, of great generosity, the giving of the best we possess for others. The disciples were enjoined to go into all the world to tell this message of love and service, in order that men everywhere might be healed and find health and strength. Men were to be released from their prisons, their minds freed from hatred and enmity, and their spirits brought into the kingdom of fraternity and good will.

What are the earnest people of our time seeking

to do in order to have life? What is the socialist seeking to do? What is the modern man trying to do with all the resources of science at his command? They are seeking just what religionists have always been seeking. They are trying to enter into greater riches, trying to gain health and beauty and a larger use of their powers. So, in the world, here and now, and in coming time, men shall be able to lay hold on vaster and more satisfying treasures of life. The cries of the wounded and distressed are the cries of those who suffer and are broken by ways which are not religious. Sometimes through their own mistakes, and often by the sins of others, they are shut out from life by injustice and ignorance and narrow selfishness.

The doctrines of religion are also determined in terms of this quest for life. What must a man believe in order to have abundant life? He must believe those things which in his living experience are necessary for guidance, for satisfaction, for the fulfillment of life in manifold and ideal ways. These things change from age to age. An illustration may be given in terms of belief about Jesus Christ. In the apostolic age, men had to believe that Christ was raised from the dead;

that was the great common belief with reference to Him. But it was a faith which involved further and more ultimate conviction. Believing that Jesus had come to earth to lead men into a larger, more adequate life, his resurrection was regarded as a sign that accompanied Him, a symbol of his power and of his possession of God's truth. Therefore, belief that Jesus was raised from the dead signified faith in Him as the Lord of life.

Later Jesus was regarded as the Divine Logos, the Eternal Spirit of the world according to the Greek conception. He was the incarnation of this Logos, a living word of God.

Again came an age of conflict, and strife, an age when the Church had gained power and was able to command legions of mediæval knights to fight its battles. Jesus was believed in at this time as a king, a conqueror, riding upon a charger, sword in hand, gorgeous with emblems and insignia of power.

To believe in Christ to-day is to believe in none of these things, primarily, but to believe in Him with reference to what we are now trying to do. How does this age seek life? It seeks life through knowledge, through expert acquaintance with the

laws of nature. More than ever before, man sets for himself the task of understanding the world, our human nature, and the scale of our moral values. The supreme need is to know what things are little and what things are great. Therefore, Jesus becomes in this age one who must be believed in as a great teacher, as a man of fresh, moral insight, as a revealer of the kingdom of love and righteousness, and a guide to its fulfillment. When we seek knowledge and insight with reference to the laws of nature and the conduct of life, we cannot ask for miracles or for military power, but must seek illumination of the mind, quickening of spirit, arousing of affection and will toward ideal interests. Therefore, Jesus is one who proclaims anew the supremacy of truth, and declares it to the world now, as to his disciples of old. The Church increasingly invites people to believe in Christ with reference to this greatest, most fundamental need at the present time — the need of knowledge and of rational ideals of life.

The same principle may be illustrated by other great doctrines of the Church. Belief in the Scriptures at one time involved a belief in many formal statements about the Scriptures, even faith in

verbal inspiration. For many people, faith in the uniform and equal authority of the different books of the Bible is essential to their belief in the book as an unique revelation of God's will. On the other hand, to increasing numbers of Christians, faith in the Scriptures means faith in them as a body of literature in which is recorded the spiritual experiences of the Hebrew people and of the early Christian Church, struggling to attain life for the race and for the community. Modern belief in the Scriptures is belief in them as an illuminating record of that great Hebraic quest for life. The Scriptures disclose to sensitive, alert minds the fundamental realities of spiritual experience. In them are many suggestions, many dramatic incidents by which our minds and hearts are quickened in the pursuit of the noblest ideals. There is nothing hard and fast, nothing mechanical or literal about them. They are always revealing the great, urgent need of the human heart for infinite reality.

It is the same with reference to our belief in God. Some past beliefs in God are so antagonistic, so repugnant to present views, that to believe them would make us worse than infidels. They belong to faiths upon which the human

heart once rested, but which no longer inspire us. To-day, chiefly in the social relations of human beings, such as parent and child, and friend with friend, we find that idea of God which satisfies our deepest needs and which may be believed in without doing injury to the other things which we know to be true.

Forms of worship, like deeds and beliefs, also rise in the quest for life and have value as they express it and sustain it. Perhaps the Church, in its practices of worship, may be best understood when thought of as a company of people who are searching everywhere for those things that give the greatest health and power and efficiency to all human beings. Thinking of the Church thus, as a company of people who would like to know what is best to do, and what is the most helpful to believe, inspiration and spiritual health are found in its services. In the work-a-day world we are confronted constantly by failure and by the tragedies of life which break our hearts and humble us to the dust. They cast clouds over us and we cannot see our way. Then we come to the Church and dramatize in imagination the great, vivid, appealing experiences of the race at its best. We sing, "Come ye disconsolate, where'er

ye languish," as though here, in this moment, we were in close and vital communion with the undiminished forces and agencies of the spiritual universe. By reaffirming in hymns and prayers and meditations the achievements of the past, and the hopes of our hearts, we are able to see the meaning of life again, to see it steadily and to see it whole. We are able to assess the experiences through which we have come, reverses of fortune, disasters and tragedies, faults and sins, and to rise above them. Through the way of suffering love and new resolves, we come to regard them as incidents, as events which do not count, as things which, at most, only discipline us, and give us more adequate capacity for the finer, more satisfying things of life. The ritual, stately and refined, is precisely the dramatization of these great crucial moments of adventure, of defeat and recovery in the soul's unresting aspiration. When we sympathetically open our hearts, and go into a place of worship, participate in the spirit of the service, if not always in the literal thought and language, share in the moods that vibrate through the prayers, and follow the minister's words, in their ideal intent, is it not true that we find ourselves back upon the heights where the visions

of life come clear and shining, full of fascinating grandeur and sublimity? This state is no mere emotional ecstasy, but a certain, convincing reaffirmation of the things which the best and greatest minds of the world have found good and beautiful.

It is just a clearer view of the things which the people who seemed to have least of them affirmed to be the best. It has often happened in the history of religion that those individuals who have had the most reverses, the least success, the smallest share of material goods, have been the people in whom the spiritual vision was clearest. But at times, also, people surfeited with outward goods, understand, too, these things upon which souls are truly nourished. These are the things which wise parents crave for their children. These are the things to which a man clings when death confronts him. These are the things which are always emerging out of our experience, transcending all the levels of cant, of superstition, and of sacerdotalism. These are the eternal values of the divine life in the soul of man.

Religious services are the means by which congregations of people in pursuit of life's ideals take their reckonings. It is like looking at our watches to see what time it is; or employing a compass to

ascertain the direction in which we are traveling; or surveying a map to discern the thoroughfares through which our journey runs. This experience of public religious worship is, in its largest sense, no mere æsthetic indulgence, no mere recreation of mind or heart. It is an unfolding of life, a moving experience of the things upon which our most vital interests turn. They challenge us to the one great adventure in which all the energies and treasures of life are most worthily employed.

Our life, as it commonly lies before us, is distorted. It is fragmentary and inconsequential. Social institutions seem to stand in isolation and to go on independently of each other. People look at educational institutions and say, "Knowledge is here." They go to the bureau of charities and exclaim, "Good deeds are here." They go to the drama and say, "The arts are here." It is true that the school communicates intelligence, the bureau of charities administers aid, and the stage is the dramatization of human experience. But none of these is adequate by itself. They need to be brought together, to be unified, to be given organic relation to a total life process. Religion has always sought to achieve such unity and to make it effective, in fact and in symbol.

The Church is beginning to fulfill once more this ancient function. It is claiming the august and significant place which it once occupied, but it does so in a new spirit and in ampler fashion. More than any other institution, it seeks to combine all ideal interests and to make them vital for individuals of all types and classes. He is not religious who is just intellectual or merely philanthropic, or exclusively artistic. The religious man, ideally conceived, gathers all these impulses into a living experience, full of intense feeling, noble thought and beautiful expression.

In the recent holiday season, there were municipal Christmas trees in many places over the country. In some communities, questions arose as to whether these Christmas trees were religious or civic. Churchmen often insisted that they must be regarded as religious, while the civic authorities contended that they were secular. As a result of such controversy, it may have happened (as so often and so tragically happens) that the good thing itself was made impossible by the contention over it. But these Christmas trees could not be civic in the best sense without being religious, nor could they be most truly religious without being communal. The Christmas

tree embodies the ideals of community life at its best. It is representative of youth, of cheer, and of good will. It is a symbol of the new civic conscience, of the new ideals permeating the whole people. Were religion divorced from civic and patriotic interests, it would become a meaningless travesty. These two things are one. The aspirations which pulse through civic life, toward neighborhood and individual welfare, toward more adequate living, and more satisfying conditions for all the people of the community, these are the objectives of religion. They express the quest for life, the embodiment of the dreams, longings, and aspirations of our nature, upon which religion founds itself and upon which alone it can keep itself fresh, vital, and significant.

This ancient yet ever present quest for life renews itself in our experience to-day and promises a fulfillment such as it has never had before, a fulfillment in which human aspiration, freer from prejudice and from pettiness and triviality, will rise to a new dignity and express itself in more commanding, satisfying forms of art. Then religion will speak more urgently to men's souls, will inspire them anew, and will gather them into its holy places for refreshment and comfort, for

inspiration and hope. To religion, men will continue to turn to know what they ought to do, what they should believe, and to anticipate in imagination the fulfillment of the kingdom of righteousness and love.

WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?

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The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. *Deut.* xxx, 14.

THE text belongs to an age when the word of God was not identified with a book or a compilation of books, so much as with the living voice of conscience and aspiration. Although written records existed of which the Book of Deuteronomy itself is a notable example, yet the "word" was primarily something spoken. It was vocal and vibrant. The criteria by which these words of the mind's flowing thought are tested cannot be the same as the criteria usually employed to determine the genuineness of documents. After one has discovered the age of a written record, its authorship and its literary construction, one has yet to ask its meaning and its value. The words must be made vocal again and allowed to speak to the mind and heart as they did to the first men who cherished them.

The Bible does not claim to present all truth. Even the world itself could not contain the books necessary for that. Nor is everything which the

Bible records, true. The earth is not flat and the world is not likely to come to an end soon. The Bible, like all other great collections of books, contains divine words among many which are not divine. It does not distinguish these by any infallible marks and we are forced to seek out for ourselves some means of determining their value. We need tests which are applicable, not only to the Bible, but also to the Vedas, to the Koran, to modern literature, and to living oral speech. Our age craves practical, empirical tests which afford the sense of reality even if they yield results which are tentative and incomplete.

The text itself suggests such a method for discovering the true word of God. "The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." This assertion may be taken either as descriptive of something one already knows, or as the means of discovering what is not clearly defined. In the latter case, the meaning is clearer when the sentence is inverted to read: "That word which is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart" is the word. This would mean that whatever word is intimate and vital and commanding is the true word. There are other texts which are similarly illuminating when inverted.

Take the one which compares the word of God to a two-edged sword. One here gets the emphatic assurance that a word which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart, is the word of God.

In another passage, it is said that all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. In that form the statement has been the subject of endless theological discussion. It has been agreed that all Scripture given by inspiration should be profitable in these ways, but the question keeps reappearing, What Scripture is really given by inspiration? How much simpler it is to take the predicate of the sentence as a genuine definition of the subject. Then it means that all Scripture which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness is given by the inspiration of God. When the Psalmist says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light," we confidently believe him to mean that all light-giving words are divine. Again, he exclaims, "Thy word is a lamp unto my

feet and a light unto my path," and we cannot be mistaken if we conclude that whatever illuminates our way and guides our steps is thereby proved to be divine.

The inversion of these familiar texts enables us to take our stand within immediate experience and to select as divine that which is best in that experience. The author of Deuteronomy evidently endeavored to impress this fact. God's word is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven or beyond the sea. The divine word is not a mystery which only persons of peculiar gifts may discover. It is at the heart of every man's deepest conviction. You may call it conscience, or the voice of duty, or one's most ideal interest, or one's notion of being a gentleman. It is not the exclusive possession of great men, or of fortunate men, or of learned men. It certainly is not the prerogative of "psychics," or of neurotics, or of ignoramuses. It speaks in every heart. All appeals to the masses presuppose their capacity to hear it. All education strives to quicken the power of the common mind to appreciate it. All religion which is vital and satisfying speaks and understands this universal language.

The text gives a characterization of the divine word by which it may be distinguished and recognized. It is intimate and vital; it is warm with the heart's burning passion; it is capable of fulfillment in noble action. These qualities may be variously paraphrased. Three terms from our daily experience are here selected. They are intended to emphasize that nearness and depth and utility of the inspired word which so impressed the writer of Deuteronomy. We may affirm then, that the word of God is serious; that it is sane; and that it is enduring.

The word of God is a serious word. It is earnest and important. It cannot be insincere nor idle nor capricious. Small talk and curious gossip do not utter it. The serious word concerns our main purposes, the ends and interests with which we feel our deeper selves involved. The lighter moods are natural enough and quite inevitable. Much may be said in their behalf. Man's life is not all of a piece. One cannot always be his best and greatest self. There are lesser selves which take their turns. In many moments we are only at play. We assume a rôle. We jest. We play the Devil's advocate. In each character one hears and speaks the language which

that character demands. Nor are these characters confused. Every one knows how to allow for casual remarks at tea-parties and on gala days. But when the hour strikes, the player throws aside the mask and resumes the serious task. He is again in earnest and his will strives once more toward its goal. Now the greater words are demanded. There must be no false commands, nor any failure to respond. Nothing but the truth will satisfy. The words spoken by a business man over his desk in his busy hours have the edge and thrust of reality. His personality is stamped on them. He must redeem them later. So it is with the locomotive engineer at the throttle. So it is with the physician bending over his patient. Each, at his task, devoutly attends to all that he hears and urgently seeks the truest word which can be found. Such words have structure and stability. When weighed against the drifting images of reverie, they are real and substantial.

The greater the crisis, the more important words become. When Moses had brought the Israelites within sight of the promised land, he was required to let them go forward without him. He had led them through hunger and plague and war. Many

times they had lost heart and rebelled. How could these wayward, impulsive people be made loyal and courageous for the task before them? The writer of Deuteronomy saw that moment in all its tremulous urgency. He felt that it was of vast and cosmic significance. Heaven and earth were called to witness. It was an occasion of life and death, of blessing and cursing, a moment for the word of the ancient covenant and of the inmost conscience to be recognized as the very word of God.

In the crises of personal history, also, the serious things are said. On the day when the son is leaving home to try his fortunes in the open places of the world, the father yearns to sink a word deep into the boy's heart. It is likely to be the word he heard from his father, which experience has only enhanced and brightened. Or it is the word which good friends speak to each other in the mellow moods of comradeship. The trustful, confiding hour in which souls unburden themselves and hold no reservations is the hour of divine speech. There is a peculiar quality of tone and accent at such moments which baffles all description, but it is the quality known to the heart itself. One sometimes suddenly becomes aware

of this deeper note of candor and sincerity in a conversation. At first, there is the casual air, the natural remoteness and austerity which is the conventional habit of civil folk. Without any warning or conscious intent, at the mention of a name or a past event, the real communion of souls sets in. By a strange shift, not unlike the half-pleasant sensation of being lowered quickly in an elevator, the conversation descends to a profounder depth. No extraneous assurances are asked or given. The two souls are sure of each other directly and unhesitatingly. The word they convey and cherish in subdued breath, but with inner *abandon*, is a word with a divine seriousness and charm. In after moments they will remember it. In periods of silence and loneliness that memory will radiate warmth and healing light.

This depth and intensity of meaning is the religious quality. Nowhere is it profounder than in that crucial moment when the troubled soul, conscious of its guilt and sincerely penitent, hears the words of forgiveness and comfort. When the child, disregarding his father's will, and, suffering in folly and waywardness, comes to himself and turns back toward the outstretched arms of love

then he begins to know what the word of God is. It is the word of compassion and pity which a human father finds welling up in his heart for the son that was lost and is found. It is the word which reconciles estranged friends. That word works miracles in him who utters it and in him who receives it. No other sign is necessary. It carries its own evidence. The joy which flows from it proves its nature. The peace and power which it brings are marks of its divinity.

Jesus seemed at times to be amazed at the words of compassion and assurance which He spoke to the wayward and the weak. They were not his own but another's. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." That is the natural impression every sensitive mind still receives upon reading the conversations of Jesus at the supreme crises of life. We still cherish what He said to mothers about their little ones; what He said to young men seeking eternal life; what He said to the weary and heavy-laden; what He said to the multitudes on the mountain at the beginning of his ministry; and what He said at last from the cross itself.

The word of God is a sane and solving word. It is not the utterance of haste or anger. Nor is it the exclamation of the mystic or the eccentric person. Deliberation and consistency belong to it. The divine word gives light. It shows the way and reveals the path.

On this account, the Beatitudes are divine words. They are guides to happiness and to blessedness. Men crave satisfaction. They seek the way to it. In their confusion and short-sightedness, they ponder over the problem. The books of religion and philosophy are multiplied in the search. Many vain and empty words concerning it are spoken by false prophets and by blind guides. These words of Jesus are novel with the grace of simplicity and the charm of solving wisdom. They reaffirm the clearest lessons of experience, namely, that docile and reverent souls possess the means of true power; that eager and hungry spirits gain spiritual satisfactions; that to the merciful, mercy is given and that the pure in heart see God. Christianity is itself good proof of the validity of these sayings, for it has always been most completely satisfying and most successful when it most adequately exemplified these principles. The early Christians often gave

evidence by their character that they had found solving answers to life's deepest needs. "They were generally quite commonplace and unimportant people with a treasure in earthen vessels. Their message they put in various ways, with the aphasia of ill-educated men, who have something to tell that is far too big for any words at their command. But they were astonishingly upright, pure, and honest; they were serious; and they had in themselves inexplicable reserves of moral force and a happiness far beyond anything that the world knew."

Experience is the final test. The words which prove true are of God. "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When the prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken."

It is also evident that the word of God is found close to the living needs of the human heart. The word men crave is the one which will be the solvent for their present perplexity and doubt. That is the comforting assurance about the deepest hunger and thirst. Its very intensity is a kind of guarantee that it will be satisfied.

Sometimes our anxiety is met by the warning that we are anxious about the wrong things. To have the direction of our desires changed is often their best fulfillment. But when the needs are vital, when they are not self-centered or concerned with artificial interests, then they are tokens of truth about to be discovered. Again and again the prophets of modern science have besought nature for knowledge and have found it. They have watched and waited, they have delved and tested, they have literally suffered and agonized in the search for the cause and cure of diseases which waste human life. Again and again they have succeeded, and now sober men of science look forward to the elimination and destruction of all contagious scourges and plagues.

Such experiences give man new confidence in his arduous pursuit of wisdom. As he centers his interest upon the great cause of human welfare, he gains assurance in the quest for truth. God seems to speak to him with greater clearness and with a fuller revelation when he craves knowledge which serves the deepest needs of men. Perhaps it is this which gives such vitality to the movements for social justice, world peace, and universal education. These mount the highways

on which men have always been enveloped by the greatest light. Here they have gained the highest and most useful revelations. Here they have attained sane and solving words, full of inexhaustible blessing and satisfaction.

The word of God is an enduring word. It endures not because of any extraneous quality but because of its inherent vitality. It proves itself time after time in the life of successive generations. It is cherished like all useful things because it commends itself directly to the judgment and experience of men. When Jesus spoke to the common people, they heard Him gladly. His stories went home to their hearts. He spoke as one having authority. He knew deeply and intimately their needs and what would satisfy them. His sayings have therefore been repeated from friend to friend and from father to son. Disciples of Jesus through the centuries have surrendered their own comfort and endured untold hardships in order to carry his words to the ends of the earth. Any words which have this power to win men to their perpetuation, are worthy to be called divine. For these words have never been profitable in a worldly way. At first hearing they have not been popular. They have struck at

ancient customs and ancestral faiths; they have denounced many forms of personal pleasure; they have imposed burdens and crosses and still men have clung to them and passed them on to those they loved.

Words which commend themselves in this way to the deep and continuous experience of men show themselves thereby to belong to the body of divine truth. And any words which are heard now for the first time and shall continue to repeat themselves with such wealth of affection and such mastery of men's wills, may thereby be known to be the words of God. If a scientist makes a new experiment in his laboratory and furnishes a clear record of it, he has added to the sum of knowledge. He has achieved something which is true for everyone else who is concerned with that problem. In that sense his discovery is absolutely and universally true. And if in addition to being true, it is also of vast importance to the welfare of mankind, as the discovery of the cause of cancer would be, then it takes on religious significance and may be devoutly felt to be the very word of God.

Those who believe that God still speaks to men are able to find confirmation in many historical

occasions. For at these times, words have been spoken which are so serious, so solving and so persistently true to experience that they are thereby judged to be divine. The process of bringing this word to clear expression and full definition is often long and tragic. It was so with reference to human slavery. Men were slow to perceive the truth about it. There are individuals yet who do not recognize it, but there is no civilized nation which has not put itself on record as to what the word of God is concerning slavery. Other revelations concerning social justice are surely being given to those races which are most sincerely endeavoring to find them and to live by them. It is not, then, the mere age of words which proves them. They must also have radiating, social vitality. They must live in the minds of great souls, affording power and satisfaction. Unfortunately not all men strive to attain and utilize the highest forms of truth any more than they strive for the highest works of art. Men of base impulses may deny the truth. Persons of irresponsible wills cannot be the patrons of practical ideals. Those who have no hunger or thirst cannot know the great satisfactions. Only serious men, bearing genuine responsibilities, are ap-

preciative of the divine word. They are therefore the ones to whom it comes. They are the bearers of revelation in religion, in science and in social justice. They constitute the successive companies of prophets. Through their search for the light, they gain illumination and they hand on the torch to other eager hands uplifted to receive it. This light, borne forward by loyal souls faithful to the path it shows, is the true and living light of the word of God.

This word is never to be measured by the particular, external form in which it comes. It may come in a burning bush, or in a dream, or in the beautiful personality of a friend. We are less likely to expect it in some strange experience than were men of old. The commonplace, familiar means of knowledge have risen to the dignity of heavenly messengers. God's truth emerges out of reasoned thoughts and out of disciplined efforts of will. It lies on the open page of many a book. It throbs in the news of the day. Where more clearly may one find the shattered illusions of mere pleasure or the agony of tragic selfishness and greed? Daily life swells with the vast tides of the fathomless sea of the moral universe. Out of its depths come good and ill in bewildering profusion.

But on every hand are interpreters and guides, keepers of the hard-won knowledge of good and evil. The teacher of little children, the judge of the court of law, the artist at the shrine of beauty — each utters the divine word. Friends earnestly conversing, mother and child embracing, lovers radiant with joy, share with each other its infinite glory and power.

THE MYSTICAL QUALITY IN RELIGION

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Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. *Matt.* VI, 28, 29.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? *John*, IV, 8, 9.

THE mystical quality in life and religion is the charm, the glamour, the fresh depth and meaning which the world takes on at times. In these fine days of May, the experience is everywhere transpiring. Can one look out upon lilac bushes in bloom and not feel the fresh spirit in the world? Can one see children dancing round the Maypole without a sense of buoyancy and of the perennial newness of life? This quality is experienced in connection with the commonest things, as when one views athletes stripped for the race; or looks down a long, shady path in the woods, or remembers such a path; or sees a sunset, the whole west aflame with the eternal miracle of the fading day.

As you have gone down a busy street, have you never seen a flock of pigeons with the purple sheen upon their necks? Any day you may see goldfish swimming in clear water. On rainy nights you may see the lamps down an avenue of the city, covering the wet pavement with shimmering figures of light. Or you have seen the lights along the far-stretching shore as you sailed into the harbor after long absence from home.

This quality is also felt in a circle of friends round the hearth, who talk together intimately. If they speak of those who were of the company in other days, the faces come back to memory. The voices, dress, and gestures appear through the vista of years with all the old gracious fascination. There is a mysterious, subtle sense of their presence, accompanied by the lifting of the horizon. Many have this sense of presence and vanishing horizons when they gather in places of worship, or when alone they read the fourteenth chapter of John, or the twenty-third Psalm. This is the value of Christ to myriads of men. The thought of Him brightens the world, lightens the burdens, and makes life radiant. He has the effect of a living, beloved companion. In his presence nothing is dull or flat. Routine tasks pulse with

interest and the worn paths gain beauty and splendor. "A devout man," says Thomas à Kempis, "beareth everywhere about him his own comforter, Jesus, and saith unto Him, 'Be Thou present with me, O Lord Jesu, in every time and place.'"

Others experience this depth and charm of life most when they commune with God, the infinite spirit, the life of nature, the unworn energy and beauty of the world. To Emerson it was the Over-Soul, "within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart, of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission; that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents, and constrains every one to pass for what he is, and to speak from his character and not from his tongue; and which evermore tends and aims to pass into our thought and hand, and become wisdom and virtue and power and beauty. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE."

This is the mystical quality in life and religion.

Persons differ greatly with reference to the objects which occasion it and they differ also in the intensity and frequency of the experience. It is susceptible of cultivation, though it seems to come from afar, independently of one's will or circumstance. It is often sought in strange and inaccessible places, although it is available in the humblest home, if love and loyalty dwell there. This quality is especially characteristic of the religious life just because religion is concerned with the deep and intimate experiences. Religion puts little things in a big perspective: views simple acts of the moment under the form of eternity. It, therefore, gives play to the imagination and to the great emotions. Sentiments of wonder and surprise and deep tenderness blend in the mystical feeling. It is more than æsthetic delight, for it suggests the presence of the infinite and the divine. Wherever these emotions and this sense of presence occur, the devout heart exclaims: "Surely the Lord is in this place: this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven."

This mystical quality flowers out of all experience which is vital and serves ideal ends. It accompanies the fulfillment of all deep-reaching,

highly valued interests. The deeds of patriots are aglow with it. The memory of heroes begets it. The whole nation felt it yesterday when the veterans marched and the graves of their comrades were embowered once more. It is not necessary to search for the springs of this wistful, inspiring elevation of soul beyond and above the real world in which we live. Too often the mystic has made just that vain effort. He has struggled and prayed and disciplined himself to find the infinite apart from everything finite. The whole without parts, substance without form, the universal without particulars, the absolute without anything relative, has often been the mystic's impossible demand.

In the company of the disciples of Jesus, one heart was fixed for a time, at least, upon that illusion. Philip said to Jesus, near the very end, "Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus never answered any one with a deeper note of pained surprise than when He replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" The God of Jesus is one who is revealed in his children: not one concealed from

them. All men are sons of God and every son reveals the nature of his father. Some are, indeed, better sons than others, and they show more fully what the nature of God is, but it was the conviction of Jesus that the common man has something divine about him. He is of infinite worth, his soul outweighs all the world beside, and whoever looks upon him sees the very image and likeness of God. The purity of heart, the patient love, the toiling energy of will which we see among the poor and humble, and among the mighty men of earth, are the clear and shining proofs that the divine nature does not hide itself or dwell apart from us.

And this mystical quality is attainable through the normal powers and functions of our human nature. The traditional mystic discounts the senses, saying these are subject to illusion and therefore cannot disclose reality. The reason, likewise, he abandons because it moves, step by step, to its goal; and because it views a thing always in relation to something else. At most, the senses and the intellect furnish a kind of broken ladder from which a leap is made beyond the domain of reason. The mystics have, accordingly, been noted for their insistent use of non-rational

means, — dreams, trances, hallucinations, and magic formulæ, in the old days; and occultism, hypnotism, auto-suggestion, "instinct," "intuition," and "feeling," in the present day. Yet in reality the normal processes of intelligent action, of sane social coöperation, and of idealized sensuous symbolism furnish far more satisfaction and a more adequate sense of God, and make God more available for well-balanced human beings, than all the devices, asceticisms, and emotionalism of conventional mysticism could do.

Man's whole being is involved in every great and satisfying experience. When the notes of a hymn, pealing forth from the chimes at the close of the day, suddenly transport one into a mood of tenderness and peace, that mystical effect involves sense and imagination and the long cultural and sentimental associations so dominant over the emotions. It may seem to be an effect quite disproportionate to such a cause and it is doubtless beyond any scientist's or poet's power fully to explain, yet it has transpired through normal means and within a widely familiar field of experience. We do not add to its meaning by ignoring its naturalness or by ascribing it to occult causes. Neither do we lessen its fascina-

tion or its reality by a truthful description. Rather do we gain control of it as an event subject to laws and materials. And in controlling it, we may again make the chimes ring and set the old hymn running in a thousand souls, where it wakens, as before, memories and consolations and deep serenity.

We do not discredit our sense and our wit in order to attain the joys yielded by a sonata or a poem, nor should we suppose it possible to achieve the true blessedness of religion by suppressing or transcending our natural endowments. It is doubtless the old assumption of the essential sinfulness and depravity of human nature which has led so many mystics to renounce ordinary knowledge as incompetent to deal with actual reality. But now that we think better of ourselves, we have more confidence in our natural powers, especially when these are trained and expanded. The miracles of science are so much vaster and so much more verifiable than the miracles of magic, that we gain respect for reason and perception and imagination by which science discovers its marvels and creates its phenomenal results. It is by means of these natural powers also that the workaday world has been trans-

formed. Just as the artificial lights that man has invented have carried the day into the night and have made fairy gardens out of places of abysmal darkness, so man's more adequate knowledge of the moral laws enables him to extend their control over the world with a new wealth of joy and beauty.

The romance and glamour which the mystics have sought so strangely and nourished so arduously is not so uncommon and so delicate a growth as they think. It springs out of every noble companionship and accompanies all adventurous achievement. The mystic of the conventional type is apparently under the same illusion as the habitual pleasure-seeker. The search for pleasure is always disappointing when one makes it the main object. Only when he forgets himself in some objective and disinterested activity does the pleasure-lover find himself experiencing pleasure. One must abandon himself to his work, to nature, to other people, in order to be happy. And in like manner, one must trust life, enter into it, battle for it, in order to feel the power and the mystery and the deep satisfactions of it. Pleasure does not exist by itself. It is always an accompaniment, an incident, a

by-product. We have as many kinds of pleasures as we have interests and activities — the pleasures of reading, of travel, of friendship, of work; but there is no pleasure in general or in isolation. Similarly, the mystical thrill and ecstasy cannot be made an end in itself. It is a result, an accompaniment, an incident of all rich and noble living. It is not something men are in danger of losing because they do not seek it. They are more likely to miss it by direct efforts to gain it, as the pitiful history of many mystics proves. Multitudes of other religionists without any such agony of introspection, or tumultuous uncertainties of spirit, have gone nobly forth to toil for truth and for the gleam of an ideal, and have found their hearts strengthened and quieted by conscious oneness with God.

Hence it turns out that pleasures come less to the pleasure-seekers than to heroes and patriots, to toiling mothers and brawny laborers. This mystical quality of life is constantly achieved by the plain and patient servant of Jesus Christ, who endures hardness like a good soldier and all the time rejoices in the comradeship and in the victories at hand. In the gospels of the New Testament, the emphasis is placed on the work to be

done, the cross to be borne, the healing of the sick, the cure of minds, the conquest of pride and covetousness and violence. When the sons of Zebedee were brought to Jesus, craving the honors and emotions of distinguished places in his kingdom, Jesus at once centered their attention upon the immediate duties and difficulties. "Are you able," said he, to "drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" It was to the same mistaken ambition that Jesus said, "He that would be greatest among you, let him be the servant of all." Everywhere, as in the Beatitudes, he made blessedness depend upon purpose, disposition, and deeds. He never put the emotional satisfaction forward by itself. He taught men to know the truth, to do the divine will, to love their neighbors. He never feared that life would become dull or stale if they did those things. On the contrary, they would have the sense of the divine presence, and would be conscious of citizenship in an eternal kingdom, destined to rule eventually all the kingdoms of this world.

It becomes evident that one may appreciate and experience the mystical quality in religion without becoming a mystic, just as one may

respect and employ reason without being a "rationalist." There are many analogies of this kind. A man may believe in freedom of thought and cultivate it without being a "freethinker." Many persons believe in socializing industry and politics who are not "socialists." Possessors of sentiment are not all sentimentalists and there is as much contrast between ordinary men with capacity for mystical feeling, and mystics like Suso and Boehme, as there is between men of wholesome sentiment and the sentimentalists.

But in their extreme and frequently pathological religious development, the mystics have been characterized by a vividness of feeling and a sense of the infinite worth of life which makes them appear to have discovered the great secret of power and contentment. Many persons are asking to-day for that secret. They crave a more vital, imaginative, and commanding way of life than our new science or our old traditions afford. Proof of this may be seen in the strange temples of Oriental cults which spring up in our cities; in the spread of many faith-cure and psycho-therapeutic types of religion; and in the increase, if not the over-elaboration, of ritualism and symbolism on every hand.

But there is a simpler, more vital, and more adequate way of meeting this need. Emerson has led thousands to its satisfaction. He has accomplished it for many in the essay on "Compensation" where he shows by the "tools in our hands, the bread in our basket, the transactions of the street, the farm and the dwelling-house," that there is a "ray of divinity" in our life, and that we can discern "the present action of the Soul of this world, clean from all vestige of tradition." And so, he hoped, "the heart of man might be bathed by an inundation of eternal love." He set forth in new parables and proverbs the great conception that every act and item of our life bears the nature of the whole. "The world globes itself in a drop of dew." "Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul . . . forever and ever, the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable. Ever it inspires awe and astonishment." But it is especially in noble action that man feels the infinite values of existence. "In a virtuous action I properly *am*," he says; "in a virtuous act I add to the world." It is an interesting illustration of Emerson's appreciation of the moral life as the way of serenity and union with the divine, that he selects from the volu-

minous writings of Swedenborg, the mystic, this moral quality. "Swedenborg," he says, "elected goodness as the clue to which the soul must cling in all this labyrinth of nature. . . . Not fate, nor health, nor admirable intellect; none can keep you, but rectitude only, rectitude forever and ever."

Christianity is fundamentally a matter of the moral life. All sentiment and piety and devotions are as nothing without that. Christianity builds a moral kingdom. It produces the fruits of righteousness. It creates objective, practical, satisfying relationships, and summons men to ever widening tasks. It knits together multitudes of believers from the past and the present and forms for the imagination and for the soul's deep affection, the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs — the holy Church throughout the world. The glory of this great Church is not her age or her wealth or her power, but her living zeal to carry still further into her own life and into the world, her Master's spirit of goodness and love. The Church maintains its most vigorous, vibrant life when it is engaged in stupendous tasks. It was lifted out of its provincialism of

thought and feeling in the last century by the great missionary propaganda which still throbs at its heart. It is being vitalized anew in our own time by its endeavors toward the establishment of social justice and a world-wide brotherhood of man. The Church is offering to risk its institutions, its formal dignity, and its set services in the interest of human welfare, and in consequence it is being suffused more deeply than ever with true piety and a sense of the presence of God.

The promise of the divine companionship is to an active, forward-striving Church. The command and the promise are, "Go . . . and, lo, I am with you alway." It is as though Jesus were saying to the Church yet: Go, teach: build schools and colleges; go, heal the sick: found hospitals and laboratories, and dispensaries; go, love your neighbors: found settlements and peace societies and boards of arbitration and be a friend of man; go, preach the gospel: publish the poetry of love, dramatize the prodigal son and the good Samaritan and reveal to men the cross itself as the proof of the infinite compassion that throbs at the heart of the world, and the divine presence shall be with you, a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Thus we may dare to hold that life and religion are far simpler and more satisfying than the mystics have believed. The God whom they sought afar and apart dwells near and within — nearer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet. And knowledge of this God requires no special sense or second sight. He walks forth in the light of day. The pure in heart see him in the beauty of the lilies and in the soul of man. Wise men read his laws in every fleck of dust and in the distant stars. He is here and now present in this pulsing life we live, the conscience and dream of our souls, the love and light of our hearts. Whoever has truly beheld the Christ of history, or the ideal Christ in any man, has seen Him. Upon that vision he may rest his faith, and through it he may look out upon the world and find it new and glorious.

THE END

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